Peace & Planet News

Dedicated to Abolishing War, Establishing Justice, and Fighting Climate Disaster
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Stop the Machinery of State Killing

By Josh Shurley

There are moments when silence becomes complicity. This is one of them. Veterans For Peace will not remain silent while the machinery of killing is being normalized at home.

Across the country, governments are once again embracing state killing—the so-called death penalty—with disturbing enthusiasm. Oklahoma is preparing to execute veteran James Pavatt on November 12. The federal government is preparing to execute former Army Major Nidal Hasan by military firing squad.

Tennessee recently attempted to execute Christa Pike and failed, leaving behind yet another brutal example of the fiction that there is some clean, clinical, humane way for the state to kill a human being.

These are not isolated events. They are expressions of the same system: one that can only offer organized violence, and frames it as justice, order, or security.

November 12 comes one day after Armistice Day.

For Veterans For Peace, November 11 is not a celebration of military power. It marks the moment the guns finally fell silent after the slaughter of the First World War. It is a day to remember what war does to human beings and to recommit ourselves to lasting peace.

What does that commitment mean if the very next morning, the machinery of state killing starts right up again?

At the same time, the federal government is preparing to execute a former Army doctor and mass shooter by military firing squad. Whatever one thinks of his crimes, deliberately ordering soldiers to shoot a restrained human being to death is not healing. It asks service members to become instruments of murder and extends the trauma outward. To the condemned, to the families of the victims, to witnesses, to prison staff, and to the soldiers ordered to kill Not to mention the society that accepts this murder as normal.

Veterans know something about the consequences of organized violence.

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A Whole World Rising

Seafarers and dockworkers march from the port of Piraeus, near Athens, towards Greece's Ministry of Maritime Affairs Oct. 30, 2026 demanding an end to Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza. See story on page 13.

France, Spain, Portugal, Senegal, Argentina, India, Indonesia, Colombia, Albania, Greece, United States, and beyond

By Rivera Sun

Protests are happening all over the world. The global systems that billionaires have built are untenable for the rest of us. Millions of people across Europe, South America, Asia, and the United States are rejecting the dystopian conditions of low wages, high costs, underfunded education, corrupt governments, climate disaster, nonstop war, and a looming AI apocalypse. Young people, especially, have nothing to lose and everything to gain from trying to reclaim a chance at a future. But people from across the generations are showing up in the movements. Dystopia isn't distant; it's here. And the future we win or lose today is the world we will all live in tomorrow.

Here is a glimpse of global protests:

• Over 3,000 individual "No Kings" events were held across the United States,

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Editorial

Thanks For Your Service?

Every day, on the wall across from my hospital bed in the Ann Arbor Veteran's Administration Hospital I could read the motto, "We proudly serve those who served us."

On the surface, a comforting slogan, but after some thought it didn't seem comforting at all, it felt like part of the ubiquitous campaign to bake militarism into our lives as deeply as possible.

Why don't we say the same to nurses, teachers, or car mechanics—people who provide real service to so many every day? Why is the military elevated to such singular status?

To work this out, I took advantage of a mandatory hall walk to ask a rhetorical question to my young RN, part of the highly skilled and dedicated cardiac-thoracic surgery intensive care team.

"Tim," I asked, "just how did I serve you during the Viet Nam War? Or how were you served by veterans from Iraq or Afghanistan? If you read the Pentagon Papers, in Viet Nam, we were serving U.S. rubber, oil and tin companies and Wall Street … the war was all a big lie and nothing has changed since."

We were near the end of our short walk. I was out of breath and took that opportunity to tell Tim, "I'll get off my soapbox now and we can talk about Smedley Butler another time."

"Where did you serve?" is a question veterans ask each other; or we often hear, "Were you in the service?" and "Thank you for your service"—one many veterans would like to not hear again.

The continual theme of having provided an important service to the nation gets reinforced at every opportunity. Why don't we say the same to nurses, teachers, or car mechanics—people who provide real service to so many every day? Why is the military elevated to such singular status?



Funeral for students and staff killed by a U.S. missile Feb. 28 at the Shajareh Tayyebeh Elementary School in Minab, Iran.

Why are so many squares in small towns decorated with Civil War soldiers and why are pro sports events preceded by fighter jet flyovers? Why do we celebrate Flag Day and Armed Forces Day and Memorial Day and Fleet Weeks and Veterans Day? Why do even minor league sports teams take time to recognize the local (military) hero of the day? How long will we annually recognize Pearl Harbor Day after the last veteran of that conflict is long gone and mark September 11 as a reason to honor the brave men and women who "defended our freedoms" in Iraq and Afghanistan? Why are there local Marine Corps "Toys for Tots" campaigns and why do military color guards precede every Labor Day and Christmas parade? Why do military recruiters roam our high school halls and have the most exciting "toys" to display? Why are our brightest college students recruited to turn their talents to Raytheon, General Dynamics, and other industries of death? How will coming history books twist the truth about the many thousands killed in Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz that was, before Netanyahu and Trump, already a waterway open to all?

And finally, what will hundreds of Iran War veterans think when they look up from their hospital beds to read that they are proudly being served by those they served in a completely useless war started on presidential whim?

—Mike Ferner

Walking the Wall

for Don Evon

By Doug Rawlings

Note: My time in Vietnam started in early July 1969—Wall panel number W21—and ended in early August 1970—panel W7, line 29—a walk of about 25 paces past the names of around 9800 dead. I call this "Walking The Wall."

Got to tell you that you're making me nervous
Every time you thank me for my service
I know you're trying to be nice and kind
But you are really, truly fucking with my mind

Trust me, it's not that I really care what you think
You who have had too much of their Kool Aid to drink
Trust me, you don't know shit about what service really means
You just need to know that nothing really is as it seems

So take a walk with me down The Wall some late evening
Where we can all listen to the ghostly young soldiers keening
But don't waste your time thanking them for their service
They just might tell you the truth—all your wars are worthless.

Order more copies of this paper at peaceandplanetnews.org/orders.

Peace & Planet News

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Photo: Ellen Davidson

Veterans For Peace is an international organization made up of military veterans, military family members, and allies. We are dedicated to building a culture of peace, exposing the true causes and costs of war, and healing the wounds of war.

For more information or to join or support our work, scan the QR at left or visit veteransforpeace.org.

The Answer to Fascism

By Jewish Voice for Peace



On Oct. 8 plainclothes ICE agents in the Bronx shot 28-year-old father Oscar Belgal, who was inside his car with his 5-year-old child at the time. Belgal survived, but as of presstime, he was being held in solitary confinement with the bullet still in his neck.

Two days later, ICE agents in Texas ran over 48-year-old Miguel Parra-Hernandez at a traffic stop, shattering his ankle and hip. Parra-Hernandez wasn't even their target—and in fact, he says he's never met the man ICE was pursuing at the time. Video of the incident shows Parra-Hernandez fleeing across a parking lot before an unmarked vehicle strikes and then runs him over.

Then, on Oct. 12, DHS agents raided the home of sitting Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, seizing her passport, cellphone, personal computers, and notebooks. Reports emerged later that the Trump regime intends to build a case against her to strip her of her citizenship.

"This kind of abuse of government power and targeting of political opponents is exactly how fascists operate," JVP-Twin Cities said in a statement. "We know the conditions that enable the occupation and genocide in Palestine, and the racist deportation regime in the Twin Cities, are similar and mutually reinforcing. We struggle against them together, in community."

Trump's Repression Machine

From the moment Trump entered office, our communities have been under constant attack. His regime has worked to systematically strip away the rights of trans people. It has empowered ICE to invade our cities, rip children from their parents' arms, and shoot people in the street. And it has made it their mission to crush the Palestine solidarity movement, for two main reasons.

In the first instance Trump intends to continue U.S. support for Israel's genocide at all costs, even though this policy is increasingly at odds with what the American people want. Poll after poll shows that the majority of Americans oppose their tax dollars being used to fund and arm the mass slaughter of Palestinians—in large part because of the way our movements have so thoroughly shifted public opinion toward support for Palestine. And so the Trump regime has raised the cost of resistance, shredding our First Amendment rights as a means to crushing growing opposition to the genocide.

And second, the right understands the Palestine movement as the tip of the spear: a way to test and refine their authoritarian tactics for the purpose of crushing resistance to the Trump regime writ large. This was laid out in the Heritage Foundation's "Project Esther"—a blueprint for dismantling civil society that directly named JVP as a top target. Nearly two years later, the Trump regime has strong-armed universities into cracking down on pro-Palestine campus activism; attempted to criminalize pro-Palestine speech; and abducted and attempted to deport pro-Palestine organizers like Mahmoud Khalil and many others. JVP is among the groups under attack. As always, some of the sharpest attacks have been against organizations and specific activists who are Palestinian, or more broadly Arab and Muslim.

The answer to fascism is solidarity.

Trump can see the writing on the wall.

People are angry. While our government sends billions each year to the Israeli military, Americans die from treatable illness because they can't afford healthcare. Millions have taken to the street to protest ICE brutality and Trump's attacks on fundamental rights. And in the months before the midterms, voters across the country have rejected Trumpism at the polls. From Texas to Colorado to Michigan to Florida, voters are backing candidates who understand the struggle for the working class as inherently linked with the fight to end U.S. support for fascism and genocide abroad.

In the face of increasing attacks on our movement and on our fundamental rights, and as we mark three years of escalated genocide in Palestine, our move-

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Trump intends to continue U.S. support for Israel's genocide at all costs, even though this policy is increasingly at odds with what the American people want. … the majority of Americans oppose their tax dollars being used to fund and arm the mass slaughter of Palestinians.

Veterans Group Urges Resistance to Illegal Wars

Veterans For Peace has been putting up billboards outside major military bases around the country urging active-duty trooops to refuse illegal orders. Locations include Ft. Campbell in Kentucky, Ft. Bragg in North Carolina, Ft. Dix in New Jersey, Ft. Benning in Georgia, Scott AFB in Illinois, Holloman AFB in New Mexico, Ft. Hood in Texas, and Norfolk Naval Base in Virginia.



Nick Mottern, a Viet Nam veteran and one of the vets working on the campaign, says, "It is not exaggeration to say that the determination of U.S. military personnel to refuse to follow Trump's and Hegseth's illegal orders appears to be our last hope of averting massive war and economic destruction globally." The VFP billboard campaign messages include "Refuse Illegal Orders" and "Abolish ICE".

"We've seen the illegal war on Iran driving sailors to attempt suicide. This war is wrong and large majorities in the U.S. are opposed to it and to the brutal Gestapo tactics of ICE," VFP President Susan Schnall said.

The former Navy nurse added, "We want soldiers, sailors and airmen to know we support them if they choose to resist. That's why the billboards include a hotline number to call, where veterans are waiting to assist them. We know it takes courage. We also know we have to live with ourselves and our consciences long after military service."

To learn more or to support this campaign, visit veteransforpeace.org.

Movement to Abolish ICE Gaining Momentum

Amnesty International USA joins calls for abolishing ICE

By Mike Ludwig



As activists rally around federal legislation to dismantle ICE, Amnesty International joins the call for abolition.

Echoing activists across the country, the global human rights watchdog Amnesty International has called on the United States government to abolish Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Emerging from the #Not1More campaign organized by undocumented activists and groups like Puente and Juntos in 2014, and gaining momentum with concerted organizing by grassroots groups such as Mijente, Detention Watch Network, Freedom for Immigrants, La Resistencia, and many others, the movement to abolish ICE has been building for years.

However, to have a mainstream organization such as Amnesty International—which has 7 million members and a global budget nearing $400 million, and which is often turned to by corporate media outlets—officially endorsing the explicit call for abolition signals a shift in the movement's momentum as public support for ICE dwindles.

While ICE has been accused of violating human rights since it was created in the early 2000s, the Trump administration's racist mass deportation campaign has taken its abuses—including "unlawful killings by federal agents"—to a "perilous new level" that is putting the general public in danger, according to a new report released by Amnesty International on September 24.

In calling for ICE to be abolished, Amnesty International joins a growing movement to put an end to an agency that has invaded neighborhoods across the country with squads of violent, masked federal agents recruited under President Donald Trump. On September 24, a coalition of public officials, advocates for undocumented people, and civil rights groups lined up in support of the Reimagining Safety Act, federal legislation introduced by Rep. Delia Ramirez (D-Illinois) that would dismantle ICE and rebuild its parent agency, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), from the ground up.

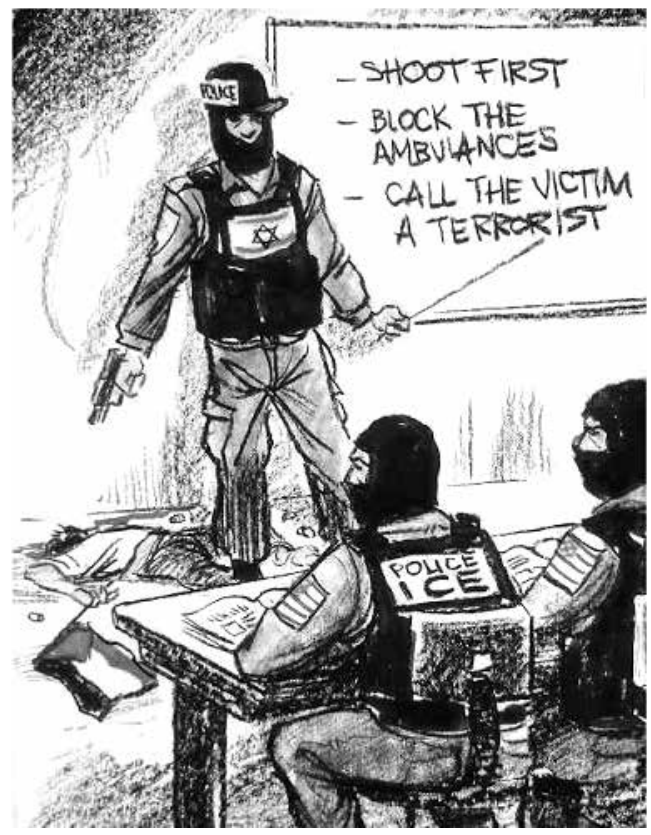
> ***The Trump administration's racist mass deportation campaign has taken its abuses—including 'unlawful killings by federal agents'—to a 'perilous new level' that is putting the general public in danger,***

You cannot militarize our neighborhoods, surveil our families, and make people afraid to leave their homes and call that safety," said Rep. Norma Hernandez, an Illinois state representative from Chicago, in a statement.

"ICE is not broken—it's working exactly as intended, and that's the problem."

Meanwhile, the violence of mass deportation continues. ICE announced this week that Carlos Josué Marchena, a 36-year-old from Costa Rica, became the third person to die at a notorious immigration jail in Louisiana in less than six months on September 18.

Marchena reportedly told family members that he missed meals and the insulin shots he needed to control his diabetes. His story echoes widespread reports of medical neglect and the complaints made about inhumane conditions, which have sparked waves of hunger strikes by detainees. At least 55 people have died in ICE custody since Trump returned to office, including a record 31 deaths in 2025, according to Detention Watch Network. Experts suspect that is an undercount.



ICE has repeatedly claimed the medical care and conditions in its jails and prison camps are better than those in most hospitals and prisons, but polling suggests that a majority of voters are not buying these claims as the death count continues to rise. Videos of ICE officers apparently breaking the law while off-duty and violently violating basic constitutional rights of citizens and non-citizens alike when attempting to make arrests regularly go viral online.

"We're going to keep pushing. We're not going to apologize," said Tom Homan, the White House border czar, in response to public scrutiny on September 24.

Trump and his senior officials unleashed masked and poorly trained ICE agents onto the streets while openly supporting violent and racist enforcement practices, creating an "institutional environment" for widespread abuses, according to Amnesty International's report. The group, which examines human rights crises across the world, examined the large-scale, militarized ICE crackdowns that recently unfolded in the metro areas of Los Angeles; Washington, D.C.; Chicago; New Orleans; and the Twin Cities in Minnesota.

Researchers documented similar abuses in each city, including arbitrary arrests, harassment, intimidation, degrading treatment and unjustified use of force by federal agents, repression of protests with crowd-control weapons, unlawful use of surveillance and facial recognition technology, and denial of due process for detainees.

ICE agents have also shot and killed multiple people, most famously Alex Pretti and Renee Good, who were protesting the ICE invasion of Minneapolis. Amnesty International said this lethal use of force should be investigated as extrajudicial executions. On September 22, family members and witnesses of five people killed by ICE testified at a shadow hearing held by congressional Democrats. Republicans did not attend.

"We cannot separate any of this from the bigger agenda we are witnessing: an agenda that has disproportionately targeted Latino, immigrant, Black and Brown communities, treating the color of our skin, the language we speak, and where we come from as reasons to target us and treat us as if we are less human," State Rep. Hernandez said.

Nadia Daar, the executive director of Amnesty International USA, said ICE's militarized enforcement operations are intended to "instill fear" in immigrants and their families, but in practice, put everyone in danger.

"ICE is fundamentally broken and cannot be fixed," Daar said in a statement on September 24. "For the U.S. government to have an immigration enforcement system that complies with international human rights law and standards, ICE needs to be abolished, and we need to start over."

However, activists on the ground have been calling for ICE to be abolished for decades, according to Laura Hernández, executive director of Freedom for Immigrants, a group that supports people in ICE detention.

"ICE is not broken—it's working exactly as intended, and that's the problem," Hernández told Truthout in an email.

Established along with DHS in 2003 as the Bush administration rode a wave of heated nationalism after the 9/11 attacks, ICE has accumulated a remarkable record of human rights abuses under both Democratic and Republican administrations as Congress repeatedly failed to pass immigration reforms.

For example, while the number of deaths in ICE custody skyrocketed during Trump's second term, advocates have been ringing alarm bells about violence, abuse, and medical neglect in ICE's network of jails and privately run prisons for years. Between 2017 and 2021, nearly 95 percent of deaths in ICE custody could have been prevented if proper medical care was provided, according to Physicians for Human Rights.

"Fundamentally, ICE has always been an agency that was designed to terrorize communities, separate families, and forcibly detain and deport our people."

"At times its violence has been more visible or received more public attention, and certainly this administration is escalating the scale and speed of its cruelty," Hernández said. "But fundamentally, ICE has always

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ICE as a Weapon Against Political Opponents

By Shay Stewart-Bouley

It's not new for the regime to go after political opponents with criminal accusations or frivolous lawsuits, but siccing ICE on Rep. Ilhan Omar is a new authoritarian low. Yes, the regime already telegraphed its intent to use ICE—specifically its Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) division—against not simply immigrants but also dissenters. The Brennan Center for Justice warned us about this just a little under a year ago.

But things just got heated up more than a notch as HSI authorities conducted a pre-dawn raid of the home of Rep. Omar in Washington, D.C., Oct. 12 as part of an "ongoing investigation" that, according to the Justice Department, is supposedly related to immigration fraud regarding the immigration paperwork submitted by her father when she was a child.

Omar represents constituents in Minnesota, where ICE has been conducting intensive activities for many months now, targeted in particular at immigrants from Somalia, a group for which 47 holds particular contempt. Omar herself is Somali, a vocal critic of the regime and the president himself, and the target on her back has finally been attacked.

It's not that ICE doesn't have authority to investigate immigration cases. It's just that there almost certainly is no reasonable reason to question Omar's legitimacy to be a naturalized citizen. Then again, most of us paying attention to the ramping-up of ICE activities since 47 began his second term knew they were already targeting and would continue to hound naturalized citizens to strip their citizenship and remove them from the country.

Because, of course, cruelty to immigrants is the point.

Being able to use that unjust and illegally applied power on a political rival is now just icing on the cake.

What is notable is that this is a misuse of HSI, despite the fact that it is part of ICE. That division of ICE usually investigates transnational crimes like drug trafficking (and money laundering related to it), human trafficking, and customs violations.

Now it is a weapon aimed squarely at harassing, intimidating, and possibly even trying to arrest and deport Omar down the line.

And surely it couldn't have anything to do with the congresswoman very recently introducing the Make ICE Pay Act, which if passed would require some or all of the $140 billion allocated to ICE and the Customs and Border Patrol through 47's "Big Beautiful Bill" to be invested in communities that have been invaded by the Department of Homeland Security under the guise of legitimate immigration enforcement. Communities that have seen violence, violations of constitutional rights, and even outright murder at the hands of federal agents.

"Make no mistake: this is an attempt to target political enemies and weaponize federal law enforcement," Omar wrote on social media. "For 10 years, Trump has targeted me with baseless lies and smear campaigns. This is just the latest escalation in his campaign of political intimidation."

I applaud her standing strong, as she has often done. I applaud her willingness to go farther than most Democrats are willing to on Capitol Hill. But it's not "just" a new escalation. It's an outright declaration of war against democracy and decent politics.

We are approaching a midterm election cycle that has Republicans nervous, because they are on shakier ground than ever with voters. We have already heard the rumblings that rightwing forces will try to prevent some or all Democrats who win seats in Congress from being sworn in and seated, either to delay a loss of power and control or to try to declare their elections illegitimate. We've already seen Republicans delay swearing in new Democrats for no good reason—Adelita Grijalva of Arizona who won a special election last year to fill a congressional vacancy and wasn't sworn for nearly two months.

Yeah, if her name and state weren't a tip-off, she is a Latina, granddaughter of a Mexican immigrant. It shouldn't be a surprise to you, but in case you need a reminder: the regime hates Black and Brown people, especially if they're women. Ilhan Omar is just an easier target to really bring the heat because of immigration rhetoric right now.

But what would stop ICE and HSI from investigating Grijalva, too? You know, find some fake "irregularity" in her grandfather's immigration and declare her own citizenship null and void as a result. It's clearly what they are threatening with Omar. What's an extra generation of separation in the citizenship and a different shade of brown skin?

Moreover, do we think it will stop with immigration "concerns" leveled at political opponents of the regime? If Democrats win too many seats in the midterms, how many of them will suddenly be investigated for alleged crimes to keep them out of office or at least delay their seating?

Maybe it's too soon to be that obvious, but this regime has never been patient and rarely cares about propriety or optics.

While this is a travesty and an insult to Omar—this raid of her home—and a sign of the jingoistic xenophobia high the regime is chasing, I think it is a sign of something far greater: Overt accusations and even arrests may be just around the corner for Democrats and other people who openly stand against this administration.

Shay Stewart-Bouley is the executive director of Community Change Inc., a Boston-based anti-racism organization that also works in Maine. Shay is also the creator of the award-winning site, Black Girl in Maine Media, where she blogs on matters of race and aging. Shay has called Maine home since 2002, and holds degrees from DePaul University and Antioch University New England.



Rep. Ilhan Omar responds after federal officers search her home.

Abolish ICE

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been an agency that was designed to terrorize communities, separate families, and forcibly detain and deport our people."

Representative Ramirez, who represents an Illinois district targeted last year by ICE in "Operation Midway Blitz," has joined other Democrats in calling for accountability and is perhaps the leading proponent of abolishing ICE in Congress. In January, Ramirez introduced a standalone bill to abolish ICE and redirect its funding to safety-net programs that can help people navigate the spiraling affordability crisis.

The Reimagining Safety Act would go further by dismantling and rebuilding the Department of Homeland Security as a federal public safety agency. ICE and Customs and Border Protection would be abolished and replaced with customs offices to limit government surveillance and militarized enforcement. DHS agencies that serve public safety—including the Transportation Security Administration and the Federal Emergency Management Agency—would be preserved as Congress begins the process of creating a separate and reformed immigration system.

Ramirez said the bill's creation was "community-led," with undocumented people and leaders from various immigrant communities contributing to the process.

"Building something new, creating in a time of destruction, is a revolutionary act. It is proof of our hope and belief in what is possible even in dark times," Ramirez said in a statement. "The people have the power to reshape our government and to reimagine how we cultivate safety and collective well-being."

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Deterring Our Way to Doomsday

Loving the bomb yet again

By Bill Astore



Maybe Mordor isn't the best model for our future?

It's amazing the enormous sums of money the U.S. government spends on destructive weaponry in the stated cause of deterring massive destruction. It's MAD, of course, this notion that peace is only attainable via the promise of annihilating another people. And now we know that annihilation won't be limited to Russia or China or Iran: that a "general" nuclear strike would likely produce a nuclear winter that would end most life on our planet. Yet the Pentagon persists in nuclear "modernization" and further "investments" in the Triad.

In the early 1960s, the Air Force wanted 10,000 ICBMs but "settled" for 1,000 Minuteman missiles. To preserve "the American way," they built a nuclear command center (Cheyenne Mountain) under 2,000 feet of granite, which was rendered obsolete soon after it was built by more accurate Soviet ICBMs with warheads in the megatons.

As a young Air Force officer, I hunkered down in the 1980s in Cheyenne Mountain. I visited Los Alamos. I've walked the Trinity Test Site in Alamogordo, New Mexico, site of the first atomic test in 1945. Friends of mine have sat in ICBM silos, ready and able to unleash Armageddon. Imagine young lieutenants and captains in their twenties, sitting underground, waiting for the president's command to launch missiles that will unleash a nuclear holocaust to kill millions, if not the planet itself.

All this fresh talk of "investment" in "modernized" nuclear weapons is sheer madness—a collective death wish—a "strange love" for world-destroying nukes. Yet again, we've come to love the bomb.

Recently, the chief of staff of the Air Force (CSAF) spoke of nuclear weapon "recapitalization": truly an abomination of the English language. You don't "recapitalize" genocidal weaponry. Both the Sentinel ICBM missile program and the B-21 bomber are unneeded weapons systems that will likely cost $500 billion or more over the next 20 years. Sadly, he isn't the only general who's positively gleeful about all the money being

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Death Penalty

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We know that violence does not remain confined to its intended target. It ripples outward. It leaves wounds in individuals, in families and across communities. And institutions that repeatedly turn to violence teach society that violence is an acceptable answer to fear, anger and injury.

Simply put, capital punishment is war logic.

An enemy is identified. The state mobilizes the capacity for violence. It presents this destructive power as safety, order and justice.

We reject that logic abroad, just as we reject it at home.

There is no morally clean execution. There is no humane firing squad. There is no peaceful way to strap down a restrained human being and deliberately stop their heart.

And there is no contradiction between demanding accountability and rejecting so-called capital punishment.

Terrible crimes cause terrible harm. Victims and their loved ones deserve compassion, justice and real security. Those who cause grave harm can be held accountable and, when necessary, separated from society.

But justice is not synonymous with vengeance.

Firing bullets into a restrained human being does not restore the dead. It does not erase trauma. It does not end a cycle of violence. It adds another deliberate killing to the aftermath of the first.

This matters especially now.

We are living amid war, genocide, ecocide, nuclear brinksmanship, rising hate, political repression and the increasing militarization of our domestic society. These are not separate moral crises. They reflect the same dangerous impulse: when confronted with fear, conflict or human suffering, to reach first for instruments of violence.

Veterans For Peace was founded to challenge that impulse. Our Statement of Purpose calls on us to resist repression in our communities, oppose militarization, seek justice for veterans and victims of war, abolish war as an instrument of policy, and help build a peaceful world. Veterans For Peace therefore calls for an end to capital punishment in the United States, an immediate halt to scheduled executions, and the abandonment of firing squads and every other method devised to make state killing appear orderly or acceptable.

> ***There is no morally clean execution. There is no humane firing squad. There is no peaceful way to strap down a restrained human being and deliberately stop their heart.***

A society committed to peace must reject the machinery of death.

We have seen enough killing. It is time to choose a better path.

Peace at Home, Peace Abroad.

Joshua Shurley is an adjunct professor of political science at Fresno City College and national vice president of Veterans For Peace.

Not Innocent Enough

By Nancy Griffith

What the hell was I doing there
In that fast-food parking lot
They say I robbed the restaurant
and a Memphis cop got shot
I was trying to feed my habit
I was scared and I was high
It was never my intention
That anyone should die

Just how many of us are innocent enough
My name is Philip Workman
And I'm not innocent enough

It's not a long walk from a trailer park
to a Tennessee cell block
But I got saved behind these bars
Soon I'll give my soul to God
Reverend Joe is praying for me
And the family left behind
They say my bullet took his life
but that bullet was not mine

Just how many of us are innocent enough
My name is Philip Workman
And I'm not innocent enough

I had no money for a lawyer
To fight the system from within
There's no justice for the poor
From the witness they brought in
Circumstance and random chance
I never meant to do no harm
Now that cop and I, we've both died
from that needle in my arm

And there were those who called for mercy
In those final days
Even the officer's daughter
cried to grant me stay
but I'm not innocent enough
I'm not innocent enough

Just how many of us are innocent enough
Just how many of us are innocent enough
Just how many of us are innocent enough
My name is Philip Workman
And I'm not innocent enough

Fraternities, Hazing, Rapes and Immunity

By Chris Hedges

I had a brief experience with a fraternity at Cornell University. I was a senior in high school. I stayed in a frat for a weekend with a former high school classmate. His "brothers" dragged me off a couch where I was sleeping and pinned me to the floor. They yanked up my shirt and dumped dog food on my stomach. They called in the fraternity mastiff and goaded the dog to "eat me."

The former classmate, Don Chartier, decided he would rather remain in the good graces of his "brothers" than intervene. The experience dissuaded me from applying to the university, destroyed a high school friendship—we had run cross country and track together—and left me with deep loathing for fraternities.

Of course, that prank pales in comparison to the reported gang rape of a female student. But it is part of the same culture of sadism and abuse that runs like an electric current through all fraternities.

You are admitted to these male enclaves by allowing yourself to be hazed, humiliated and stripped of your dignity. Hazing rituals weed out those with enough self-esteem and independence to stand up to the hierarchy. They ensure conformity and obedience. It is a filter. Fraternity "brothers" are self-selected. Those who have the strength to oppose public humiliation and that perpetuated on each new cycle of recruits leave.

Fraternities across the country are plagued by allegations of rape and sexual assault. Men in fraternities are three times more likely to commit rape than those who do not belong to fraternities. These crimes, well known to fraternity members and university administrators, are masked by a culture of silence.

The president of Cornell, Michael I. Kotlikoff, whose university expels students who protest genocide and shields students who commit rape from criminal prosecution, issued the usual hour-of-reckoning statement that comes accompanied with a lot of vague promises of reform. He is no doubt busy doing damage control with his big donors, not a few of whom come out of the fraternity system.

Kotlikoff and all administrators involved should be fired. Those accused of rape should be criminally charged. The disciplinary investigations of fraternities—which universities keep secret—should be made public. Fraternities found to have engaged in sexual assault—which will be most of them—should be closed. Those fraternity members who carried out sexual assaults—no matter how many years ago—should face trial. This is the minimum. But it is a minimum I am certain Cornell will never achieve.

Universities in the United States have turned education upside down. They make war on scholarship, inquiry, self-criticism, moral autonomy and the search for artistic and esoteric forms of expression—in short, the world of ethics, creativity and ideas. They cater to the demands of rich alumni, who censor curriculum and purge professors and programs. They perpetuate the elitism, racism and rigid definition of gender roles in male fraternities. It is a culture of conformity and intolerance.

Education in the U.S. is a mindless quest for collective euphoria. Students are taught that self-worth and self-fulfillment are found in crowds, in mass emotions, in status, rather than individual transcendence. Those who do not pay deference to the celebration of wealth, privilege and power are cast out as freaks.

It is a war on knowledge in the name of knowledge.

"Knowledge," as C. Wright Mills and Alan Wolfe wrote in The Power Elite, is "no longer widely felt as an ideal; it is seen as an instrument. In a society of power and wealth, knowledge is valued as an instrument of power and wealth, and also, of course, as an ornament in conversation."



James O. Freedman—the former president of Dartmouth College—fought the school's entrenched culture of elitism, white male entitlement, fraternities and football. The Dartmouth Review published a cover article that depicted Freedman—who was Jewish—as Hitler and wrote that he was orchestrating the "Final Solution" to traditional conservatism at Dartmouth.

Freedman told the college in his inaugural address:

"We must strengthen our attraction for those singular students whose greatest pleasures may come not from the camaraderie of classmates but from the lonely acts of writing poetry or mastering the cello or solving mathematical riddles or translating Catullus. We must make Dartmouth a hospitable environment for students who march 'to a different drummer'—for those creative loners and daring dreamers whose commitment to the intellectual and artistic life is so compelling that they appreciate, as Prospero reminded Shakespeare's audiences, that for certain persons a library is 'dukedom large enough.'"

It was a forlorn and lonely battle. Dartmouth proved impervious to change.

Andrew Lohse, a former Dartmouth fraternity member, was profiled in an article in Rolling Stone magazine. He was ostracized, not only by students, but the university administration, for his public exposure of the hazing and abuse he experienced.

"I was a member of a fraternity that asked pledges, in order to become a brother, to: swim in a kiddie pool of vomit, urine, fecal matter, semen and rotten food products; eat omelets made of vomit; chug cups of vinegar, which in one case caused a pledge to vomit blood; drink beer poured down fellow pledges' ass cracks… among other abuses," he wrote.

He accused Dartmouth's 17 fraternities, 11 sororities and three coed houses—to which roughly half of the student body belonged—of perpetuating a culture of "pervasive hazing, substance abuse and sexual assault," as well as an "intoxicating nihilism" that dominates campus social life.

"One of the things I've learned at Dartmouth—one thing that sets a psychological precedent for many Dartmouth men—is that good people can do awful things to one another for absolutely no reason," he wrote. "Fraternity life is at the core of the college's human and cultural dysfunctions."

Any effort to hold football programs or Greek organizations to account becomes an attack against the collective identity that gives universities their sense of prestige and empowerment. All those who question or criticize these organizations are treated as the enemy.

Bernard Lefkowitz captured the sickness of this culture in his book Our Guys: The Glen Ridge Rape and the Secret Life of the Perfect Suburb. Lefkowitz wrote about a group of high school athletes in Glen Ridge, New Jersey, who in 1989 lured a 17-year-old developmentally disabled girl to a basement. The boys sexually abused her with a broomstick and a baseball bat. When the assault became public, the town rallied not around the victim, but "our guys."

The woman who said she was drugged and raped by the Cornell fraternity members has received "multiple threats" to withdraw her civil lawsuit, according to her lawyer Thomas Giuffra.

The corporate world sees football players, fraternity brothers and sorority sisters as prime recruits. Students are conditioned to join the team, to surrender moral autonomy, to accept and carry out acts of personal humiliation, to treat with contempt those who oppose them or who are different, to define their life by an infantile narcissism centered on greed and self-promotion and to remain silent about crimes they witness or take part in.

It is the very ethic of corporations.

The ruling elite sees in Greek organizations and college sports programs the training ground for an amoral class of speculators, bankers and corporatists who pillage the country. The goal is to train people to subsume themselves into the herd, to unquestioningly use technical and vocational skills to serve the system.

These forces of conformity are hostile to the humanities, where students are taught to question assumptions and structures. The humanities prod students to seek a life of meaning and an ethical code that challenges the blind, utilitarian obedience to power and profit that corporations and the military instill.

The goal of education is not to tell students what to think, but to teach them how to think. It is to instill the capacity for moral choice and moral action.

The latest sexual assault case is a savage indictment of Cornell University and a savage indictment of us.

Chris Chris Hedges is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Presbyterian minister, author, and television host. His books include America: The Farewell Tour; American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America *and* War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning. *He previously worked overseas for the Dallas Morning News, , and NPR, and hosted the Emmy-nominated RT America show* On Contact.

Doomsday

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thrown at nuclear weapons, the Golden Dome, and weapons in space.

This mad (MAD) glee for money in the cause of mass destruction and madcap militarism is destroying not just our democracy. It's like our "leaders" are out of Mordor, searching for the One Ring of Power, with AI data centers and surveillance the equivalent to Sauron's eye that sees all.

I wonder if Sauron spoke of "modernization" and "recapitalization" in Orcs and Nazgûl and Balrogs?

The current CSAF promises to "advocate relentlessly" for new weaponry like the Sentinel ICBM and B-21 Raider. He says "readiness" to fight is an airman's "first responsibility." Actually, that first responsibility is to support and defend the U.S. Constitution. We must be guided by the law of the land, not by the beauty of our weapons (Brian Williams) or a warrior's urge to use them (Pete Hegseth).

America, stop the MADness. A policy of mutually assured destruction means we're all dead. As the Outlaw Josey Wales said: "Dyin' ain't much of a living." Nor is deterring our way to Doomsday.

William Astore, a retired lieutenant colonel (USAF) and professor of history, is a TomDispatch regular and a senior fellow at the Eisenhower Media Network. His personal blog is Bracing Views.

When Monsters Walk Among Us

By Henry A. Giroux

We have many monsters to destroy.
—George Seferis

But how can anyone tell the truth about Fascism, unless he is willing to speak out against capitalism, which brings it forth?—Bertolt Brecht

More than four decades ago, the Greek composer and public intellectual Manos Hadjidakis issued a warning that now reads less like a reflection on fascism than a prophecy of our own time. The greatest danger, he suggested, comes when we grow accustomed to the monster, when its presence no longer shocks the conscience, and its violence begins to merge with the routines of everyday life. Tolerance does not diminish the monster; it multiplies the conditions that allow it to flourish, strengthening its presence in public life until monstrosity itself acquires the authority to govern.

We have reached such a moment.

The monsters are no longer hiding in the shadows. They occupy presidential offices and ministries, command armies and police forces, control digital platforms, dominate television screens, administer borders, build detention centers, and transform the suffering of others into political theater. Their language of racial purification, mass deportation, extermination, vengeance, and disposability no longer produces the outrage it once might have summoned. Cruelty is displayed as strength. Humiliation becomes entertainment. The spectacle of suffering becomes a source of political pleasure.

The monsters are no longer hiding in the shadows. They occupy presidential offices and ministries, command armies and police forces, control digital platforms, dominate television screens, administer borders, build detention centers, and transform the suffering of others into political theater.

The monster triumphs not simply when it commits atrocities, but when its language becomes ordinary, its violence becomes acceptable, its weaponization of racial and class divisions goes unnoticed, and its presence no longer disturbs the moral imagination.

Primo Levi once observed that "Monsters exist, but they are too few in number to be truly dangerous. More dangerous are the common men, the functionaries ready to believe and to act without asking questions." Levi remains right about the role of unthinking functionaries, but today the monsters themselves have acquired institutional power and public legitimacy. Emboldened by staggering economic inequality, empowered by the machinery of high-tech authoritarianism, and legitimated by an expanding culture of fantasy. They are warnings, projections, embodiments of collective fears, and often weapons for deciding who belongs within the circle of humanity and who can be expelled from it. What matters politically is what happens when the monster steps out of myth and fantasy, takes possession of the institutions of power, and acquires the authority to decide who may live, who must suffer, and who can be made disposable.

There is, however, another problem with the metaphor of the monster itself. To imagine Donald Trump, Stephen Miller, Pete Hegseth, Itamar Ben-Gvir, Benjamin Netanyahu, or other architects of contemporary authoritarian violence simply as monsters risks placing them outside history, as if their cruelty originated in some private pathology detached from the society that produced them. The monster can then become an alibi for the society that created him. Moral outrage becomes individualized, while the institutions, economic interests, racial hierarchies, cultural apparatuses, and political forces that make organized cruelty possible disappear.

The problem is not that monsters do not exist. The problem begins when monstrosity becomes an explanation rather than a question. Monsters do not descend upon society from somewhere outside history. They are produced within history, cultivated through institutions, protected by bureaucracies, legitimized by law, financed by powerful economic interests, amplified by media, and normalized through culture.



A singular focus on monsters can obscure the deeper structure of gangster capitalism, a system that "prioritizes certain forms of power over the common good and enables the gradual dehumanization of our societies."

The question must therefore change. We must move from monster to machinery, from the pathology of the individual to the political economy of organized cruelty, and from there to the cultural and educational forces that teach people how to live with the suffering such machinery produces. Monsters do not act alone. We see their handiwork in streets stained with blood, in migrants brutalized and left to die in detention centers, in the torture documented in Israeli prisons, and in the bodies of children and families torn apart by Israeli and American bombs in Gaza. Behind these abstractions are torn limbs, dismembered bodies, children pulled from rubble, families burned and buried beneath the ruins of their homes, and human beings reduced to flesh and bone by systems in which cruelty has been organized, authorized, and repeated until even the most horrific violence threatens to lose its capacity to shock.

The horror lies in a society's growing accommodation to monsters, in the silence surrounding their crimes and the erosion of moral and political boundaries that once made their actions intolerable. Such silence is never innocent. It is the rigor mortis of ethical and political decay, the point at which a politics organized around death begins to pass as ordinary life. The nightmare no longer lurks in the shadows; it claws its way into daylight and is met with indifference, resignation, or applause. The question is how people learn to live amid mass suffering and eventually look away. What forms of power require such silence? What institutions cultivate it? What culture teaches people to turn away from the bodies left behind? And most important, what pedagogical machinery teaches millions not merely to tolerate cruelty but to identify with those who inflict it, desire the power they embody, and experience the suffering of others as the price of their own imagined liberation?

Political economy, culture, and pedagogy converge here. The monster becomes inseparable from gangster capitalism, pedagogical terrorism, and the culture of cruelty. Gangster capitalism does not accidentally produce monsters. It increasingly requires them, along with publics capable of loving them.

Arendt's concept of radical evil takes this argument further, moving us from the failure of judgment to the political machinery that renders human beings superfluous. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, radical evil emerges from a political order capable of stripping human beings of rights, history, individuality, and finally their claim to membership in the human community. The concentration camp represented the most extreme realization of this logic, but its political significance extended beyond the camp. Totalitarianism required institutions capable of transforming human beings into disposable matter.

Arendt's later account of Adolf Eichmann complicated the picture further. Eichmann did not appear before her as a demonic figure possessing some unfathomable depth of evil. He appeared frighteningly ordinary: bureaucratic, careerist, obedient, incapable of thinking seriously about the consequences of his actions. The banality of evil did not mean that his crimes were banal. It meant that extraordinary crimes could be administered through ordinary routines, bureaucratic language, professional ambition, obedience, and the suspension of judgment.

The problem of the monster must there-

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Monsters

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fore be situated within political economy, culture, pedagogy, and history. The conditions that make monstrosity possible are neither accidental nor timeless. They emerge from societies in which extreme inequality is treated as natural, cruelty becomes entertainment, racial hierarchy is defended as common sense, militarism becomes a national virtue, and entire populations are designated as disposable.

Aimé Césaire understood long ago that imperial violence never remains safely confined to the people against whom it is first directed. Colonial brutality, he warned, produces a "terrific boomerang effect": the habits of dehumanization, racial hierarchy, lawlessness, and organized violence cultivated abroad eventually return home.

Trumpism did not invent this political culture. It inherited it, intensified it, and turned its imperial habits inward. In this sense, the monster came home because the machinery that produced it had been operating for decades.

Pedagogy becomes central because fascism is never merely imposed from above. It must be learned. People must be taught whom to fear, whom to hate, whose suffering matters, whose suffering can be ignored, and whose disappearance can be celebrated. They must learn to experience cruelty as strength, domination as freedom, racial hierarchy as natural, and violence as national purification.

Private anxieties are given public enemies. Loneliness is transformed into the counterfeit solidarity of the tribe, powerlessness redirected into aggression, and resentment elevated into a moral virtue. Fear is converted into hatred and humiliation into the desire to humiliate others. Fascism thrives on this emotional economy because it gives private suffering a public target. The wounds inflicted by an increasingly brutal social order are redirected away from the structures that produce them and toward immigrants, Black people, Palestinians, feminists, intellectuals, queer people, dissidents, and anyone else designated as an enemy.

A culture of barbarism takes hold when cruelty is no longer confined to the state or its most fanatical leaders but enters everyday life, shaping public consciousness, political desire, and the boundaries of who is considered human. Barbarism becomes cultural when large numbers of people support forced removal, collective punishment, starvation, exterminatory violence, and the destruction of civilian life without experiencing such policies as a moral catastrophe.

Israel offers a chilling example. In May 2025, a survey conducted by Pennsylvania State University professor Tamir Sorek found that 82 percent of Israeli Jews surveyed supported the expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza, with 54 percent saying they were "very" supportive. More disturbing still, 47 percent agreed that when the Israeli military conquers an enemy city it should act as the Israelites did in the biblical conquest of Jericho, by "killing all the residents." These figures register something more terrifying than support for a particular military policy. They reveal how the language of expulsion and extermination can migrate from the margins of political life into the moral vocabulary of everyday society.

Omer Bartov has gone further, arguing that Israeli society has become complicit through both action and silence, and is increasingly marked by violence, vulgarity, and indifference. What is at stake here exceeds the crimes of Netanyahu, Ben-Gvir, or the Israeli military. It points to the pedagogical production of a social order in which the language of elimination becomes thinkable, mass suffering becomes tolerable, and exterminatory violence can be absorbed into the ordinary rhythms of national life. This is the endpoint of pedagogical terrorism: the manufacture of subjects for whom barbarism no longer appears barbaric.

More disturbing still, 47 percent agreed that when the Israeli military conquers an enemy city it should act as the Israelites did in the biblical conquest of Jericho, by 'killing all the residents.'

The culture of fascism does not merely tolerate monsters; it turns them into celebrities, strongmen, saviors, and objects of identification, reproducing a cult of leadership.

Trump offered a chilling display of these mobilizing passions of fascism when he called upon his followers to cheat in the November elections. At the Republican convention in Dallas, he instructed thousands of supporters to raise their right hands and repeat an oath of personal loyalty that included the declaration, "I don't care if I'm registered or not. I'm going to try and cheat like hell like they do." This was more than another assault on democratic norms. It was a fascist political ritual in which loyalty to the leader, contempt for law, and the thrill of collective transgression were fused into a mass spectacle. Yet the incident was absorbed into the churn of the news cycle as another bizarre Trump performance. This is how fascism becomes ordinary: the outrageous is reported, consumed, and forgotten before its meaning can become a matter of sustained public judgment.

The political task cannot be reduced to removing individual monsters from power. The language of monstrosity becomes politically disabling when it individualizes what is systemic, directing attention toward pathological leaders while leaving intact the institutions, economic interests, media ecosystems, racial hierarchies, and educational forces that produce authoritarian consciousness.

The defining political question of our time is not whether monsters have returned. It is what kind of society produces them, what forms of power need them, and what pedagogical machinery teaches people to follow them. The monster is not the end of the analysis but its beginning. Fascism cannot be defeated by removing its most visible leaders while leaving intact the economic, political, and cultural machinery that produced them. The struggle against fascism must also confront gangster capitalism, white supremacy, militarism, the carceral state, and the institutions that turn human beings into disposable populations.

But resistance cannot live on outrage alone. It needs a language of possibility and a politics capable of making hope concrete. Hope is neither optimism nor faith that history bends automatically toward justice. It is a practice born when people refuse the manufactured loneliness of neoliberal life, discover one another in struggle, and recognize that what they experience as private misery is often a public wound produced by structures of power. It takes form in unions, classrooms, demonstrations, mutual-aid networks, abolitionist movements, struggles for Palestinian freedom, immigrant justice campaigns, and organizations capable of turning anger into collective power.

There are already signs that such a politics is struggling to be born in the United States. The resurgence of democratic socialism, the extraordinary growth of the Democratic Socialists of America, the electoral victories of socialist candidates, and renewed labor militancy suggest that increasing numbers of people are no longer willing to accept the tyranny of the market as the horizon of political possibility. DSA reported more than 120,000 members by the summer of 2026, alongside a widening field of socialist electoral victories and organizing campaigns.

These developments should neither be romanticized nor mistaken for a mass socialist transformation. But they matter because they register something the ruling order desperately wants declared impossible: capitalism is once again being named as a political problem, socialism has returned to public life as a language of possibility, and collective struggle is breaking through the suffocating claim that there is no alternative.

Hope is dangerous to fascism because authoritarian power feeds on isolation, historical amnesia, political exhaustion, and the conviction that nothing can be changed. Militant hope shatters that conviction. It turns private suffering into public anger, spectators into political agents, and the loneliness on which fascism feeds into collective power. Against the pedagogy of fear, it creates a pedagogy of resistance and civic courage. Against the culture of cruelty, it makes solidarity a weapon and justice a collective demand. Against a society organized around disposability, it insists that human beings are worth more than markets, borders, property, and profit, and that the institutions producing misery, abandonment, and organized violence must be transformed.

Monsters are made by history, and they can be unmade by collective struggle. That struggle must confront capitalism itself and build a democratic socialist politics capable of wresting power from the ruling elites, returning it to ordinary people, and transforming hope into a force for remaking the world.

This article was shortened for clarity and space. The entire article can found on the Peace & Planet News website.

Henry A. Giroux currently holds the McMaster University Chair for Scholarship in the Public Interest in the English and Cultural Studies Department and is the Paulo Freire Distinguished Scholar in Critical Pedagogy. His most recent books include: The Terror of the Unforeseen; On Critical Pedagogy, 2nd edition; Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education*, 2nd edition;* Race, Politics, and Pandemic Pedagogy: Education in a Time of Crisis; *and* Pedagogy of Resistance: Against Manufactured Ignorance*. His latest book is* Insurrections: Education in the Age of Counter-Revolutionary Politics*. His website is henryagiroux.com.*



‘We Tried to Levitate the Pentagon’

The almost unbelievable life of Ed Sanders, trickster god of the U.S. counterculture

By Garth Cartwright

He gave Jimi Hendrix his gear, freaked out Frank Sinatra, inspired Norman Mailer—and tried to topple the American war machine. As a documentary about his band the Fugs comes out, the 87-year-old gives a rare interview

“Charles Manson once wrote me a letter saying, ‘If I was as powerful as you claim then you wouldn’t be here,’” Ed Sanders tells me over a video call, savoring the menace in that sentence.

Sanders is an American maverick; a musician, poet, activist, journalist and author whose greatest hit remains his bestselling 1971 book The Family, in which he chronicled the lives, crimes and trials of Manson and his followers. Sanders was well placed to report on crazed hippies, having played a pivotal role in launching the U.S. counterculture—though he very much espoused peace, love and consciousness-raising, rather than Manson’s apocalyptic worldview.

“I’ve always been a peacenik,” says Sanders. “I got locked in a cell in 1961 for protesting against nuclear armed submarines, and today I’m protesting against the Trumpster. I don’t subscribe to apathy and nihilism.”

Aged 87, Sanders is speaking with me as Fugs Film!, a feature-length documentary about the Fugs, the offbeat folk-garage-psych band Sanders initially led from 1964-69, and re-formed in the 1980s, gets its U.K. premiere this week. “I don’t do many interviews,” he notes. “I’m constantly approached by people requesting them. And often they are wanting access only because I knew Jimi Hendrix and Allen Ginsberg and Andy Warhol and Janis Joplin and …” He shakes his head. “Everybody now wants to make a documentary about someone I once knew.”

Indeed, Sanders was a Zelig of the Lower East Side, friendly with Ginsberg (“A great man”), William Burroughs (“Unnerving, brilliant”), a then unknown Jimi Hendrix (“He was trading as Jimmy James. We gave him his first wah-wah pedal. Nice, talented guy”), to name just a few of his associates. In concert, the Fugs shared bills with the Velvet Underground, the Stooges and the Grateful Dead, but the biggest impression was made by a then unknown band who opened for the Fugs in Detroit’s Grande Ballroom in March 1968. “I’d never heard of Sly and the Family Stone,” Sanders recalls. “They came on and aroused the audience to ecstasy. When we came on, everyone was limp, worn out by how high Sly had taken them.”

Inspired by Ginsberg’s epic poem “Howl,” Sanders had hitchhiked from Kansas to New York City as a teenager. “I wanted to meet ‘the best minds of my generation’, as Allen put it—and I did,” he says. “Both Tuli and I came from the beat poetry scene. We formed the Fugs to blend poetry with rock’n’roll after seeing beat poets dancing to a jukebox playing Martha Reeves and the Vandellas and the Beatles. It seemed an obvious thing to do.”

Sanders’ literary leanings meant he also ran the city’s Peace Eye Bookstore and published the cheaply mimeographed zine Fuck You/A Magazine of the Arts, which featured writing by Burroughs, Norman Mailer, Ginsberg and other beat poets such as Gregory Corso.

“Fuck You’s motto was ‘total assault on the culture,’” recalls Sanders. “We thought we could change the world with words. I sent copies to Picasso, Beckett, Sartre, Castro and Khrushchev inviting contributions, but none of them replied.” He laughs at his youthful audacity, adding that he did get attention from the NYPD, who attempted to prosecute Sanders for obscenity: Fuck You was frequently, cartoonishly sexual. Sanders was “fighting for free speech alongside the beats and Lenny Bruce,” he says.

The musicologist Harry Smith produced the Fugs’ eponymous 1965 debut album for the Folkways label. The band shifted to ESP-Disk, home to free jazz pioneers Albert Ayler and Sun Ra, but neither label had any commercial heft, so Sanders was overjoyed when Jerry Wexler of Atlantic Records—who had helped make Ray Charles a star and was about to do the same with Aretha Franklin and Led Zeppelin—signed the band.

Yet on hearing the finished masters, Atlantic dropped them. “Wexler told me the Ertegun brothers [co-founders of Atlantic] found a song called ‘Coca Cola Douche’ offensive,” Sanders says. “I should have said ‘OK, we’ll leave it off’ but I got all pious about it. A mistake, as it meant we didn’t release an album in 1967, so we missed out on all the attention those Summer of Love albums got.”

Given Sanders continually faced censorship, I ask him about Macklemore: shortly before we speak, the rapper was booted from Ed Sheeran’s U.S. tour due to his onstage calls for a free Palestine. “There are always people wanting to censor you,” Sanders replies, “and when it’s a very rich guy who owns the stadiums and doesn’t want people to hear your opinion then, yeah, he can order such. For me, being older, it’s inspiring to see young musicians putting their shoulder to the wheel.”

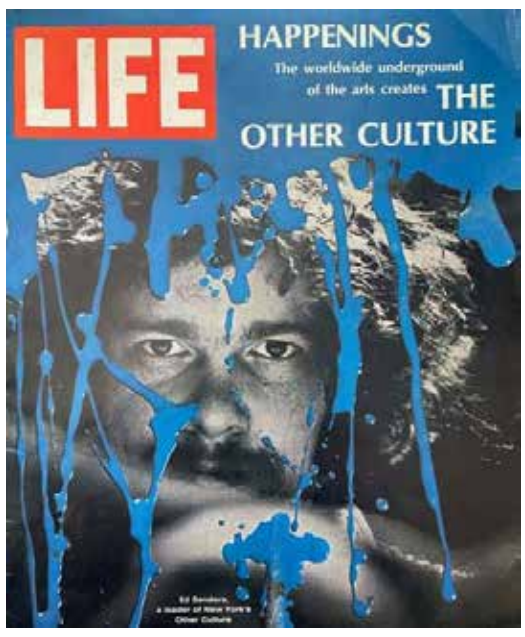
The Fugs survived their spat with Atlantic, joining the roster of Frank Sinatra’s Reprise Records in 1968. Label head Mo Ostin had to play Fugs demos to Sinatra before he could sign them. “Apparently Frank said: ‘I guess you know what you’re doing.’” The label released the terrific Fugs album *Tenderness Junction*, which includes “Exorcising the Evil Spirits from the Pentagon Oct 21, 1967,” a recording made at the Fugs-led mass protest at which thousands formed a human chain around the Pentagon and chanted “Out, demons, out!”

“The Fugs existed to protest against the American war machine, as much as we did to make music,” says Sanders, “and we understood that spectacle draws attention. So to suggest we were going to try and levitate the Pentagon, well, it might sound ridiculous but it gave a focus to our protest and attracted a lot of attention.”

Mailer, who attended the protest, wrote about it in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Armies of the Night*, and the Pentagon protests are now regarded as high points in the anti-Vietnam War movement. “We celebrated the 50th anniversary of the protest in 2017 by forming a human chain around the White House and attempting to levitate it,” says Sanders. “Again, we shouted ‘out, demons, out!’ and, again, nothing happened. Just as the Vietnam war continued for another nine years, Trump is back in the White House.”

Did that make Sanders feel defeated? “No,” he replies firmly. “I’m an optimist. We must keep pushing, we can’t give in to de-

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Top left: ‘I wanted to meet the best minds of my generation—and I did’ … Sanders on the cover of Life magazine in 1967. Photograph: Life Magazine. Top right: ‘We thought we could change the world’ … the Fugs in 1968. Ed Sanders top left, with—left to right—Ken Pine, Tuli Kupferberg, Ken Weaver, Bob Mason, Charles Larkey. Photograph: Courtesy of Ed Sanders Archive. ‘We existed to protest the American war machine as much as we did to make music’ … Sanders (above ‘for’) and bandmate Ken Weaver on an anti-Vietnam war march in 1967. Photos: Courtesy of Ed Sanders Archive

World Rising

... continued from page 1

urging early voting and marching to the polls. Dallas' early votes have already surpassed the total votes cast in the last presidential election. San Diego had 80,000 people in the streets. Large marches and rallies took place in Detroit, Chicago, New York City, and other cities. Since their campus polling place was shut down, North Carolina A&T students marched for an hour to the new polling place, demonstrating the injustice with every step. Amid these historic protests, Meta shut down Indivisible's social media accounts in a blatant attempt to censor the movement.

• Democracy is a flashpoint for numerous protest movements around the world. India's campaign for voting rights swelled with mass demonstrations demanding the election chief's resignation after he kicked 130 million people off the voting rolls. Thousands of people welcomed a march of Serbian students into Belgrade as a tense parliamentary election unfolds this weekend. Similarly, millions flooded the streets in Brazil in support of President Lula as the close run-off election with Bolsonaro, Jr. heated up.

• France's protesters (who are not just students anymore) set Paris on fire as over 800,000 people joined protests in 140 cities across the country.

• Sparked by France's demonstrations, thousands of students flooded Athens in an education protest. Argentinian students were met with a police crackdown, even as a judge fined the government for failing to fund universities. Costa Ricans marched against a $17 million funding cut. Italy's "No Meloni Day" march rallied students in protest against education cuts and austerity. Madrid teachers and students are launching a strike for education funding in Spain.

• Meanwhile, affordable housing protests continued in Spain and inspired similar encampments for housing in Porto and Lisbon, Portugal.



Students protesting in Perpignan, France. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

• Indonesia's wildfire crisis is sparking protests demanding that the government declare a national emergency. The toxic smoke smothering Southeast Asia has caused respiratory illnesses in over 200,000 people in Indonesia alone.

• Senegalese protested against the cost-of-living ahead of a planned 3-day general strike.

• Albania's Flamingo Revolution, which had been nonviolent thus far, broke into street brawls with police in October as heavy repression cracked down on the demonstrators. The prime minister continues to refuse to resign.

Other movements collapse under a descending spiral of police repression and protester street violence as political leaders use protest violence as an excuse for heavier repression

Albania is not the only place where protests turned violent. Let's unpack a few important points: Almost all of the violence is instigated by police repression. Some of the "violence" described in the media is property destruction, not harm to other humans. Some of the property destruction is caused by opportunistic looters smashing store windows and stealing things amid the unrest. Some of the flaming images are literal dumpster fires or bonfires used as street barricades. Other acts of arson are more serious, such as the torching of the Albanian Supreme Court building after it ruled in Jared Kushner's favor.

So, are these protests still "nonviolent"? It's a good question. Each situation should be weighed carefully—and watched carefully. It's not uncommon for a nonviolent movement to struggle with outbreaks of violence. Some movements regroup and re-establish discipline. (Bangladesh's 2024 revolution was an example of this.) Other movements collapse under a descending spiral of police repression and protester street violence as political leaders use protest violence as an excuse for heavier repression. France is at this juncture as President Macron tries to clear the streets and condemn the "riots." Many movements find themselves unable to keep going as authorities use the violence and property destruction as an excuse for a crackdown. This is not always the pattern, however: sometimes the increasing repression backfires on political leaders despite protester violence. (Nepal's Gen Z Protests in 2025 followed this pattern.) Movements that reassert nonviolent discipline and call a wider sector of society to support the original demands are more likely to succeed.

These dynamics matter; they often determine whether or not a movement wins.

As we watch these protests around the world, look for the answers to these questions: How is each society reacting to the arson, property destruction, and street violence? Are more people joining the cause—or condemning the tactics? Are authorities using the unrest to justify police repression? Is the repressing increasing to a point where the movement is in danger of collapsing? Are the power holders (like the Albanian prime minister) telling the public they won't back down to "rioters"? Or are they agreeing to meet the movement's demands? Is the cry for "law and order" echoing more loudly than the protesters grievances? Are smoke, smashed windows, and street skirmishes keeping people from the streets or drawing them in?

These are key questions for anyone working for change. The answers can make or break a movement. In the coming days or weeks, France, Spain, Argentina, and Albania will be wrestling with them. Take notes. Your nation may be next.

Germans blocked a weapons factory with sit-ins against supplying weapons to Israel's genocide in Palestine. Canadians roundly rejected the Trump-backed notion of the province of Alberta's secession to become part of the United States. A campaign against deportation flights at Love Field in Dallas, Texas, has succeeded in stopping ICE from using their airport. Public outcry stopped the barbarism of livestreaming the execution of a mass shooter in the United States. (Next step: stop the barbarism of death sentences.)

A world of crisis and change requires a world of courageous changemakers. They're here. We're them. We're everywhere.

Author/activist Rivera Sun has written numerous books and novels. She is the editor of Nonviolence News *and a nationwide strategy trainer for nonviolent change. She is an organizer with Campaign Nonviolence and serves on the advisory board of the World BEYOND War and the board of Backbone Campaign.*

The Fugs

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spair. While things are terrible in the US right now, I do believe the American people will come to their senses and vote out the Republicans."

Alongside public exorcisms and psychedelic hymns, Fugs albums featured a mishmash of satirical skits, choral music, protest folk, mock country, Hare Krishna chants, Yiddish songs from Kupferberg's heritage and poems by William Blake, Matthew Arnold and Ginsberg read to music. Their eclecticism can be maddening, though the band's first two albums are very elemental, more akin to U.S. punk bands such as the Dead Kennedys and the Dead Milkmen in their broad humour and anti-establishment fervour than to their 60s contemporaries. Songs such as Kill for Peace remain relevant today, though I'm Gonna Kill Myself Over Your Dead Body ("if you fuck anybody but me") leaves a nasty taste.

"Some of the songs we wrote then we probably wouldn't write now," says Sanders, today more professorial than hippie in appearance and speech. Other songs celebrated marijuana, amphetamine and LSD: "We advocated for mellow drugs, never hard drugs. We had a guitarist who was a junkie and it messed him up. And we avoided cocaine. Today pot is legal in New York, so that's one of the battles we fought that we actually won."



Sanders and the Fugs chasing the demons from the swamp in Washington, D.C., in 2017. Photo: Ellen Davidson

He reformed the band in 1984 with Kupferberg (who died in 2010 aged 86), occasionally performing and recording. Today, Sanders, long resident in leafy Woodstock, keeps the Fugs going with younger musicians. "I still like to jump about on stage," he says, "and working with young musicians means they all have other bands, so its not like I have to keep them busy".

Sanders hopes Fugs Film! can inspire others to continue the noble tradition of kicking against the pricks. Fighting that American war machine, he says, "is a constant struggle. A holy struggle. A brilliant struggle. To let the human spirit struggle against the warrior caste."

This article was originally published by The Guardian.

Garth Cartwright is a London-based journalist and the author of Princes Among Men: Travels with Gypsy Musicians *and* More Miles Than Money: Journeys through American Music.

'State violence'

Paris Students Rage at Politicians and Heavy-handed Policing

By Angelique Chrisafis in Paris

Before dawn on Tuesday outside the Lycée Sophie-Germain in central Paris, hundreds of teenagers dragged wheelie bins, metal barriers and shopping trolleys to build a barricade outside the front door of their secondary school.

Climbing to the top of the piles of bins, pupils held banners calling for more funding and greater equality in French schools.

But they were also protesting against French riot police, who have been accused by human rights groups of using disproportionate force against children in what is fast becoming the biggest youth protest movement in decades.

"Everyone hates the police," chanted a group of 15- and 16-year-olds. At least 215 teenagers, 715 police officers and 85 teaching staff have been injured in clashes in recent days, according to the government.

"We're teenagers with wheelie bins, and the police have heavy weapons, it's totally mismatched," said Livia, 17, who was studying theatre at a lycée in northern Paris and did not want her real name published.

"The police are extremely violent in France. This is state violence and it's horrible seeing police allowed to target children. It's important to remember this is institutionalised violence, it's planned and deliberate."

French students with protest signs fill a street during a demonstration in Nantes

Ten investigations into possible police brutality are under way after injuries allegedly involving the use of police weapons, including one 15-year-old who lost his hand, another who lost his eye and a boy whose jaw and teeth were shattered, leaving him, as his mother said, barely able to eat with a straw in hospital.

"The policing is catastrophic, people have been mutilated by weapons—one boy has lost an eye—it's horrible," said Lily, 17 (not her real name), who was studying social sciences in her final year of school and demonstrating for more funding in what she called a discriminatory education system that left poorer children behind.

"My parents support me being on the barricades and at the protests. They're worried about the policing, but they said they'd come and get me from the police station if I was arrested."

Teenagers nearby held up cardboard signs protesting against the use of teargas and the deployment of riot police.

"A state that gasses high school students is a weak state," read one banner. "Gas rapists, not children," said another sign in reference to calls for tougher laws against sexual violence. Another banner read: "Not here to riot."

The unprecedented protest movement that began outside one school in a low-income Paris suburb has spread across the country, taking the government by surprise.

Students Protest Across France

Hundreds of high schools have been barricaded and forced to close as pupils protest against teacher shortages, crumbling buildings and overcrowded classes.

The justice ministry said 5,060 people had been arrested since the protests began, 87% of them minors. More than 1,800 people had been prosecuted, including 1,483 minors, the ministry said, without specifying the crimes. It said 790 cases had been dismissed. The government said 24 schools had been burned or ransacked.

'The students in central Paris have shown a great sense of solidarity with those in the Paris suburbs who face much worse conditions in their schools. There's a feeling of solidarity and generosity between teenagers that flies in the face of the notion that we live in an era of selfishness.'

"In more than 20 years of teaching, I've never seen protests this big," said one teacher at Sophie-Germain high school who planned to join the Paris demonstration on Tuesday afternoon.

"The students in central Paris have shown a great sense of solidarity with those in the Paris suburbs who face much worse conditions in their schools. There's a feeling of solidarity and generosity between teenagers that flies in the face of the notion that we live in an era of selfishness. No one knows how long this will go on for."



"Faced with repression, class unity": banner carried by high school students in Paris Oct. 6.



Paris, Oct. 17, 2026, 16-year-old Ewen and friends said they were protesting everything from the conditions at their school to the wildfires that ravaged France in the summer. Photo: Phineas Rueckert

Tens of thousands of students, trade unionists and parents were expected to march in support of the protests across France on Tuesday afternoon, including in Paris, Toulouse, Nice and Bordeaux, with riot police on alert.

Isabella, 16, said she had the backing of her parents, who work in film and music.

"Young people have been teargassed for doing nothing but trying to express their opinion," she said.

"Everybody told us that school was the great leveller, but today that is not the case at all. A teenager in the banlieue [suburbs] of Paris is never going to have the same opportunities as a student from the city center. That's why we're here today."

Lionel, 17, who was in his final year at school and hoped to study English at university, said: "The aim isn't to riot or smash things up; we just want to protest peacefully."

Teenagers also chanted songs against Marine Le Pen, the far-right, anti-immigration candidate in the 2027 presidential election, who is high in the polls as Emmanuel Macron steps down after a decade in office.

Many teenagers were worried about the election. "We're also protesting against the growth of the far right," said Aislinn.

Justine, 17, who had been at the barricade since before dawn, said she hoped the protest would continue and grow into a "massive" movement.

"For years, there has been a mental health crisis among young people in France and anger at rundown schools and the stresses of the education system. We need the government to listen to us and make radical change."

Maya, an 18-year-old sports science student, had spent two days on a barricade at her university building in Bobigny in solidarity with school students, and joined the Paris protest march on Tuesday.

She had attended high school in Drancy in Seine-Saint-Denis outside Paris, in a school she said had mould on the walls, not enough chairs for class and absent teachers who often were not replaced.

"It's only when we spoke to other students at university who came from different types of schools in the countryside or city centres that we realised our experience was so different and that there was a real injustice to the conditions we had to learn in," she said.

Julie, 46, a self-employed parent of two high school-children from Levallois, in the west of Paris, had joined her husband to accompany her sons to the Paris march.

She said: "We're here to support our children but also to protect them from what is going on with the police and the violence we've seen with the police these last few days. We've seen our own child teargassed many times in front of his school … it's unbelievable."

Students' names have been changed.

Angelique Chrisafis is the Guardian's Paris correspondent. She has reported from several European countries including Spain and Greece and was previously Ireland correspondent. In 2011, she covered the Tunisian revolution.

Dockworkers Worldwide Mobilize Against Arms Shipments, Gaza War

By Assiah Hamed

A global dockworkers' strike involving 113 ports in 25 countries began on Friday, Oct.30 in protest against military supply chains supporting Israel's genocidal war on Gaza. Palestinians in the besieged territory have also rallied in support of the movement.

Organized by the dockworkers' union coalition Dockworkers Don't Work for War, the action has been described by activists as the largest coordinated port mobilization of its kind.

'The same military, shipping and oil interests driving war and genocide in Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen, Sudan, Congo, and beyond are driving fuel poverty, cost-of-living crises and unsafe conditions in our own ports and communities.'

Organizers said more than 25 unions across five continents would refuse to handle weapons shipments to Israel, staging 24-hour strikes and other actions, including work stoppages and demonstrations of varying durations.

Local unions in France, Italy, Greece, Spain, Turkey and Morocco issued a joint call for an end to wars in the Middle East, the war on Gaza, and "an end to the militarization of ports".

No Harbour for Genocide (NHG), a pro-Palestine organization campaigning to halt maritime transfers supporting Israel's war, told *The New Arab* that its research had identified 315 consignments of components for Israel's Elbit Systems passing through 56 commercial ports in 29 countries between August 2025 and September 2026.

"The same military, shipping and oil interests driving war and genocide in Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen, Sudan, Congo, and beyond are driving fuel poverty, cost-of-living crises and unsafe conditions in our own ports and communities," a spokesperson for NHG told The New Arab.

Organizers said that participation would range from full-day strikes to shorter walkouts and demonstrations, but the extent of the disruption remained unclear as industrial action and protests have been taking place across several countries.

In Greece, the ENEDEP dockworkers' union called a strike at Piraeus, the country's largest port, as part of the international day of action.

Protesters in Turkey's Istanbul gathered outside Haydarpaşa port beneath a banner reading: "No to war, no to armament!"

Italy's Unione Sindacale di Base (USB) said demonstrations were planned at major ports, including Genoa, Trieste and Gioia Tauro.

In France, the CGT ports and docks federation called a one-day strike at major ports, including Le Havre, Marseille, Dunkirk and Rouen, in opposition to "the militarization of port facilities" under European policies.

"International coordination is the only way forward, and the evidence is in what workers have already won," the NHG spokesperson said.

"Earlier this year, 26 containers of military steel were seized, and that would not have happened without coordinated action to reject three different MSC vessels from ports in Greece, Spain, Türkiye and Italy," they continued.

"The supply chain of imperialism is global, and workers have learned the lesson it teaches: it can only be materially disrupted if action is taken globally too."

The pro-Palestine maritime campaign Global Sumud Flotilla (GSF) also announced its participation, saying it would join land-based mobilizations across four continents as part of the global shutdown for Palestine.

GSF added that around 20 of its activists had launched a 24-hour campaign of non-violent direct action to obstruct and challenge three major commercial vessels bound for, or servicing, Israeli infrastructure.

Prominent Spanish-Palestinian flotilla activist Saif Abukeshek told The New Arab that, as strikes take place around the world, GSF is communicating with local unions, including Italy's USB, to offer support and amplify voices of solidarity with Palestine.

He said the group hopes to expand the movement to countries such as South Africa, India and Australia.

"I believe the message is that we are tired of continually waiting for governments to take the dignified action of ending their complicity and preventing our ports and seas from being used for war purposes and for transporting materials used in the genocide against the Palestinian people," Abukeshek said.

He continued, "The message is clear. We are taking a step forward in our mobilization and we will be adding this as part of our strategy, in addition to the sea missions and flotillas that try to break the Gaza siege."

"We will also continue mobilizing through our flotillas to block ships carrying such materials and complicit in the war, as well as organizing actions at sea that expose the roots of the genocide and the companies that continue to benefit from and invest in the genocide and the war."



Dockworkers in Spain joined the coordinated effort.
Photo: European Dockworkers Council

Palestinians in Gaza Back Global Strike

The international mobilization has drawn support from Palestinians, particularly in Gaza, where the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions have voiced solidarity with the movement.

On Thursday, Oct. 29, Palestinians gathered at the fishermen's port near Gaza City ahead of Friday's strike, hoping to draw attention to the plight of fishermen who have faced killings, injuries and arrests during Israel's assault on the territory.

Shaher Saad, secretary-general of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, told The New Arab that Friday's international action reflected growing opposition to Israel's brutal war on Gaza.

Saad also highlighted the situation facing Palestinian fishermen, who have endured destruction and been prevented from accessing the sea since Israel launched its assault.

He said his organization firmly supported the international mobilization, describing it as "one form of solidarity with the Palestinian people".

"We knew that many unions affiliated with the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions wanted to express solidarity with the Palestinian people and oppose the transfer of lethal weapons to the Israeli government, which is killing Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem."

"When we learned about this trade union initiative, which involved calling for strikes and protests at workplaces, we formally supported it."

The union leader stressed the importance of the action in calling for governments to intervene and impose a full arms embargo on Israel.

"This is an important form of solidarity because these weapons are being used to kill Palestinian children, women, elderly people, medical staff and journalists," Saad told The New Arab.

Saad confirmed that the federation was coordinating with Palestinian workers and fishermen in Gaza, while expressing hope that Friday's mobilization would lead to sustained international cooperation rather than remain a one-day show of solidarity.

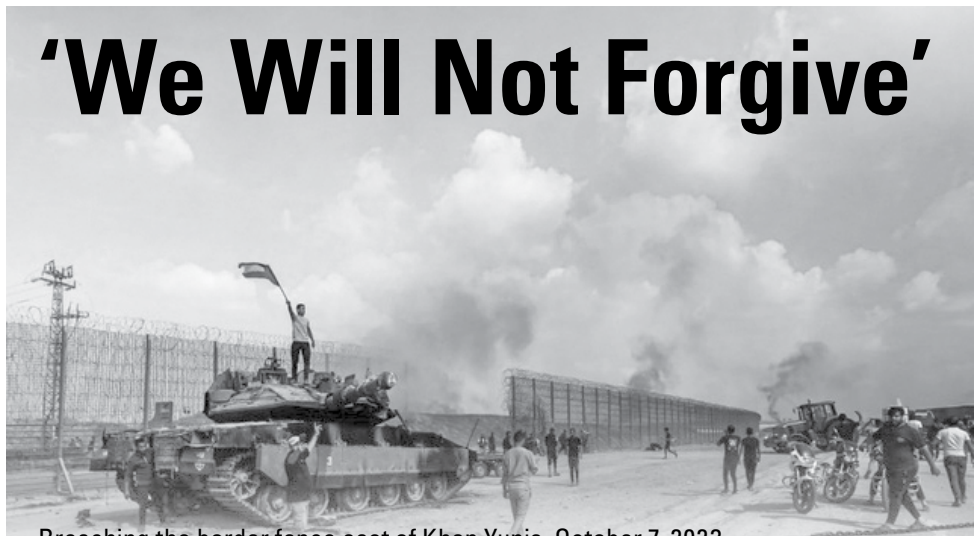
"The workers who took part in Friday's strike have performed a heroic act of solidarity. They have raised their voices in support of the Palestinian people and stood alongside them," he told The New Arab.

.He added, "The Palestinian people want peace, but peace must be based on their rights and dignity, and above all on the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. It cannot simply mean concessions granted by the Israeli occupation to those it chooses."

"We do not want this occupation on our land, and there can be no lasting solution while it continues to remain on our homeland."

Assiah Hamed is a journalist at The New Arab *covering MENA, UK and international news. Her work has been featured in publications including* The Daily Mirror, Daily Record, OK! Magazine*, and* Manchester Evening News*. She holds a BA in Journalism and International Relations and an MA in Investigative Journalism.*

‘We Will Not Forgive’



Breaching the border fence east of Khan Yunis, October 7, 2023. “Three years later, the Flood has not stopped, and we are still drowning in its raging waves,” wrote a Gazan journalist. Photo: Yousef Masoud/AP/Haaretz

They loathe Israel for destroying Gaza. They also blame Hamas for gambling with their lives and promising victory. In searing Facebook posts, Gazans describe the loss, abuse and daily humiliations no camera can capture.

By Amira Hass

On that accursed day, they pushed Gaza off the edge of the cliff … then picked up their phones to find the best angle for the shot,” Gazan writer and poet Ni’ma Hassan wrote on her Facebook page on October 7. A few hours later, she posted again, perhaps responding to readers who had attacked her for criticizing Hamas, as she has done before: “Even after three years, they tell us that the outcome is what counts and victory is near. By God! Even if you build paradise […]we will not forgive what has happened and is still happening to us.”

Hasan writes openly what many in Gaza say among themselves and some put into writing, with varying degrees of boldness and bluntness. They see no contradiction between criticizing Hamas and recognizing that Israel chose to destroy Gaza and their lives there, and even declared its intention to do so.

Their anger at Hamas over what they describe as a strategic mistake, an adventure, a gamble or even a conspiracy does not diminish their loathing for Israel or their knowledge that this endless war is part of Israel’s longstanding policy against the Palestinian people.

Journalist Hamed Jad, the Gaza bureau chief for the Ramallah-based daily Al-Ayyam, also recalled Hamas’ promises of a decisive victory after the terrible suffering. He, too, was writing on the third anniversary of “Al-Aqsa Flood,” Hamas’ name for the October 7 attack. About a year after the attack, at a press conference with Khalil al-Hayya, now chairman of Hamas’ political bureau, Jad asked: “Can you name a single achievement October 7 has brought?” Al-Hayya replied that it was too early to judge.

This week, Jad revisited that answer from two years ago with bitter irony: “Al-Hayya was right when he told me: ‘It is unfair to judge the Flood before it has ended, because it has not yet ended.’ Indeed, three years later, the Flood has not stopped, and we are still drowning in its raging waves, ground down day after day by the millstones of killing, destruction, displacement and loss.”

Addressing al-Hayya, who is now abroad and four of whose sons were killed by Israel, Jad asked with biting sarcasm: “Do you still insist that it is too early, and unfair, as you put it, to judge the Flood and the suffering it has inflicted on us so far?”

Those living in the Gaza Strip today, and those who have managed to escape, long for October 6, 2023. They have not forgotten the blockade Israel imposed on them or their isolation from the world; the unemployment and poverty that isolation caused, and the humiliation that came with both; the struggle for the right to receive medical treatment outside the Strip; or being prevented from seeing relatives and friends living just 80 kilometers away.

Yet Gazans defied the blockade through community and family life, their studies and their plans for their children. They cultivated their talents in painting, poetry, prose and computer science, pursued building projects and business ventures, and connected with the world online. In the face of Israel, the hostile power that controlled them and aspired to “sink Gaza into the sea,” their insistence on living rather than merely existing was an act of civil resistance. Hamas’ “Flood” held this kind of unarmed struggle in contempt.

Here is a fragment of life before the Flood, from another post Hassan wrote that same day: “My daughter Mayar spent Friday, October 6, 2023, memorizing a short play in English about olive trees to perform on the school radio. My job was to buy her a Palestinian dress. On the morning of October 7, they burned the school, the olive trees, the studio … and we left the dress and the city behind.”

Her daughter will no longer be able to fulfill her dream of riding a motorcycle through the city’s streets without anyone making comments. The city no longer has streets, and her daughter now wears a hijab. She has grown up, in other words, and will no longer be able to fulfill her wish.

Hassan leaves no doubt that by “they,” she means Israel. But in another text, addressed to Hamas, she tallies figures that have reached her: more than 70,000 children who have lost one or both parents; more than 86,000 households headed by women; nearly 260,000 families living in shelters; more than 64,000 widows; and almost 17,000 people have disabilities. U.N. reports support some of these figures: UNICEF reported more than 58,000 children who had lost a parent in October 2025, while U.N. Women estimated 86,290 women-headed households in September 2026.

“And amid all these details,” Hasan adds, “two million lives of unrelenting pain.”

There are everyday pains that go unphotographed, supposedly small ones, that teacher Samia Wadi describes in another Facebook post. One student is always late, arriving halfway through class because she has to wait for her sister to return from her own lesson and hand over the pair of shoes they share. Many students take no notes as Wadi explains the lesson. She knows they are waiting for UNRWA to provide notebooks. Two others miss class every few days, whenever the truck delivering purified water passes through the displacement camp where they live, so they can fill their jerry cans. Another student is frequently absent. Wadi knows that the girl’s grandfather banished her widowed mother from the southern Strip to the north. The younger children stayed with him. Reading between the lines, the absent student has to look after them.

Another teacher is described as moving “with the lightness of a merciful angel among her very young pupils” in a tent turned into a classroom. The writer, also posting on Facebook, is mental health specialist Dr. Saeed al-Kahlout. In his poetic style, he describes how she gently explains the lesson and promises her pupils a better future. She pauses over the “r” at the beginning of “right,” he writes, then over the “l” at the beginning of “life.”

Just then, a stray bullet is fired from a tank a few hundred meters away. “The bullet sliced swiftly through the air, crossed the distance in moments and lodged in the teacher’s heart … In the classroom tent, the children watched their teacher struggle for her final breaths, drenched in her own blood. In the tent where she lived, children are waiting for their mother, not yet knowing that she will never return.”

A few weeks ago, tempers flared in Gaza when some sheikh used his Friday sermon to subject his listeners, willing and unwilling alike, to a flood of abuse over women’s supposedly immodest behavior. Many women and men criticized his misogynistic detachment from a reality in which women bear the burden of keeping families going under conditions so harsh they are scarcely imaginable.

Some women go further, writing about “the consequences of annihilation that no one sees. Before the war, these things happened discreetly, and very rarely. Now they happen brazenly, proudly, as a matter of routine and a way of life,” as the young Najia Mahmoud writes by way of introduction. The English translation is based on Tamar Goldschmidt’s Hebrew translation. For three years, Goldschmidt has been posting breathtaking texts by men and women in Gaza on her Facebook page. Amid collapsing walls and falling skies, these writers paint in words events, feelings and thoughts that no camera can capture, and Goldschmidt translates them with extraordinary skill.

Mahmoud writes: “The age of slavery has not ended. It has moved into the tents and called itself ‘protecting the daughter’s honor’ and ‘the circumstances of war.’ What is happening around us today

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Gazans defied the blockade through community and family life, their studies and their plans for their children. They cultivated their talents in painting, poetry, prose and computer science, pursued building projects and business ventures.



Gaza City: Children riding a donkey-drawn cart and discussing the tragic fate of their mutual friends. Photo: Jehad Alshrafi/AP/Haaretz

Settlers Commit the Pogroms. Israel's Public Enables Them

Beyond the handful of activists resisting settler violence, Israel's Jews cannot claim to be uninvolved. Their taxes fund it, their institutions protect it and their indifference lets it flourish

By Amira Hass in Haaretz

Day after day, headlines appear along the lines of "Israeli Soldiers and Settlers Block Palestinian Olive Harvest in West Bank's Area B" (one example, from a report by Matan Golan on Saturday afternoon). An entire people bears responsibility for this routine, not just a handful. May the activists who use their own bodies to try to plug the ever-widening hole in the crumbling dam forgive me. Apart from them, there are no uninvolved civilians among Israel's Jews.

If God's chosen, who voted for far-right ministers Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir, aren't stealing olives, they're stealing grapes and barley, along with entire vineyards and fields. And if they haven't stolen those, they've robbed a poor man of yet another flock, with full military protection. If they haven't fired shots, they've beaten someone with a club. And if not a club, then an iron bar. The abusers openly revel in their crimes, in full public view and on camera, while the majority responds with tacit consent, indifference or inaction.

In 2008, a new provision was added to Israel's Penal Law, allowing a person to shoot and kill to protect their property: a home, a business or a farm, including grazing land. The provision is popularly known as the "Dromi law," after Shai Dromi, a Negev farmer who shot dead a Bedouin who entered his property. Israel Katz, now defense minister, spearheaded this addition to Israeli law. A court acquitted Dromi of manslaughter, recognizing his right to defend his property and accepting the argument that the break-ins had been recurring.

In 2025, there were at least 1,836 such "Shai Dromis" in the West Bank. According to a report by the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, that is the number of attacks Jews carried out against Palestinians there that year resulting in casualties, property damage or both.

From January through September 21, 2026, Israeli settlers carried out more than 1,700 attacks against Palestinian "Shai Dromis" that resulted in casualties, property damage or both. But when Dromi is Palestinian, military practice forbids him to defend himself. Quite the opposite. Woe to anyone who tries to defend the lives and property of his family and neighbors, like Farouk Ramadan from the village of Tell. He was killed by an armed Jew, declared a "terrorist" and punished again after his death. His home was demolished. Others in the village were arrested.

Since 2006, the United Nations has documented the recurring attacks that strictly kosher Jews carry out against Palestinians, including Bedouin. That first year, 117 attacks were recorded. For 10 years, the number rose and fell. The rioters reached a temporary peak in 2011: 423 attacks. I vividly remember the distress and sense of emergency at the press conference where that figure was presented. Then, as now, it included only attacks resulting in casualties, property damage or both, excluding those that amounted merely to frightening incursions and threats. Since 2016, when "only" 95 attacks were recorded, the frequency of these attacks has only increased.

Imagine 1,500 attacks a year against Jews in New York. Imagine 300 such attacks in Berlin. All filmed, all documented. What an outcry, what an uproar they would cause! How vigorously every responsible body would act. But here, the

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An Israeli settler attacks a left-wing activist in the Palestinian village of Jannatah in the West Bank photo: Ilia Yefimovich/AFP

'Not Forgive'

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makes your blood boil, turns your stomach and makes you sick beyond words. The child marriages that have suddenly become widespread in Gaza are not marriages. They are an auction of girls! To give you an idea of just how low things have sunk: My neighbor, a man in his twenties, is married to a 15-year-old girl. He 'wipes the floor with her' day and night. He beats her for half an hour, and the girl stays silent despite the pain. The moment a cry of pain slips out, he starts beating her all over again.

"And what drives you out of your mind, makes you go crazy and want to set every last tent on fire, is not just the beating. What drives you out of your mind is that her family is a few meters away, his family is right there with him in the same compound, and every one of them has a shoe stuffed in their mouth and says nothing! They throw their own flesh and blood to a piece of human garbage, and when you open your mouth, they trot out an excuse uglier than the sin itself: 'By God, lady, times are hard, and we can't afford to support the girls, so let's protect her honor.' What expenses? What honor are you talking about?! Anyone who can't raise children shouldn't have them in the first place! Why do you keep having one daughter after another if you're going to throw them to their torturers in such a vile way?"

Mahmoud continues: "We are living through war and annihilation. The soup kitchen feeds you, you and your children, and all of us in the tents live on aid like paupers. Not one of you is any better off financially than his daughter. These days, none of you is paying out of your own pocket, so how can you plead poverty and sell your daughter so cheaply and so shamefully? With the same coercion and lack of decency, you see a man throw his little children out among the stray dogs and into danger to peddle goods and support him! A tiny child, no bigger than your little finger, ought to be at school or at least sitting safely in his tent. Instead, he's dumped on the streets to support an entire family. What right do you have to make a child worry about keeping you alive?"

Writing from a different angle a few days ago, Dr. al-Kahlout described other children: "The two children sat on a donkey-drawn cart on their way back from the learning tent, their new school. Al-Mawasi's scorching sun seared their tiny faces. Sand from the school, where the pupils sit directly on the ground, mingled with the dust of the road and danced through their worn-out clothes. They began asking what had become of their mutual friends. 'What about Tamer?!' asked the first, sitting on the edge of the cart and lifting his little feet whenever another cart, drawn by a horse, came close, afraid it would crash into them. 'Tamer was killed with his dad at the entrance to their tent. A missile tore them to pieces. People spent three days picking up bits of flesh around the tent.'

"The boy said this while staring at something in the distance, as though the scene had suddenly appeared before his eyes. Then he remembered something, broke off his story and asked: 'And Aboud? Where is he? Why didn't he come to school today?'

"'Aboud, oh, Aboud! Both his legs got cut off. While he was asleep, a piece of shrapnel tore through the tent and landed right on them. When he woke up, they found him with his legs cut off.'

"'And what about our teacher, Mr. Issam? Did you see Mr. Issam today?'

"'Didn't you hear what happened to him? Mr. Issam got hit by a bullet while he was waiting in line to fill up water in the city center, and he got paralyzed. He's in a tent now. He doesn't react or answer.'

"'And Hani? Hani, when they went back to their house in the north, the wall fell on them. He died, and his little sister and their mom, and his dad went crazy because of it. I'm telling you, wow, he walks around the streets shouting: 'My children and their mother. Oh God, my children and their mother.'"

Originally published in Haarez.

Amira Hass is an Israeli journalist, columnist, activist, and author, known for her columns in the daily newspaper Haaretz covering Palestinian affairs in Gaza and the West Bank, where she has lived for almost 30 years.

Empire Without Guardrails

The global toll of U.S.-Israeli arrogance

By M. Reza Behnam in CounterPunch

Imperial systems historically fall by the weight of their insatiable greed, reckless wastefulness and institutional hubris. Today, the United States stands as the sole imperial power, with Israel—the last remaining colonizing state—serving as its vanguard in West Asia. Both are showing the first signs of fundamental decline.

A single miscalculation can forge a new reality. Driven by imperious delusions, the U.S. and Israel launched deadly wars of choice against Iran in June 2025 and again in February 2026. The folly of their acts was believing that Iran, a civilizational nation, could be easily defeated. Instead of a swift victory, the flawed assumption has triggered a wider regional quagmire and undermined America's global power and credibility.

After eight months of military and economic turmoil, the ongoing war is an existential crisis for both Iran and the United States.

For 47 years, the United States and Israel have been a threat to Iran. Tehran is mindful that Washington and Tel Aviv are bent on destroying the country, and that the war is an existential fight it must win. The start of Operation Epic Fury, on February 28, was the Islamic Republic's 9-11.

Iran also knows that it cannot continue to live with America's threatening regional presence (40,000 to 50,000 U.S. soldiers stationed across at least 19 bases) and with the crippling economic sanctions that have hindered development.

As the U.S. and Israel witness their historic chokehold over global resources and defense capabilities slip away, they have reacted with fierce ruthlessness against Palestinian resistance, Iran, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Ansar Allah in Yemen.

In addition, after a long track record of betrayals, Iranian leaders are keenly aware that the U.S. is not interested in honest negotiations or peaceful coexistence. By starting an unprovoked war that violated international law, destroyed vital infrastructure, and killed 3,468 Iranians—including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, members of his family and senior leadership—Washington proved it cannot be trusted.

Concurrently, the United States is desperately trying to hold onto its military and economic supremacy. Both Washington and Tel Aviv had little idea when they started the war that they had set in motion a revolutionary shift, regionally and globally. The unrestrained devastation has shattered the illusion of U.S.-Israeli political, economic and military invincibility that has remained unchallenged for 81 years.

Since emerging as the strongest economy following World War II, the American empire has maintained its prosperity and hegemony through resource exploitation, global militarization, strategic partnerships with merciless regimes, the promise of trickle-down wealth and subtlety-managed domestic indoctrination.

American supremacy has relied heavily on dollar hegemony. By making the U.S. dollar the default currency



for global commerce, Washington secured an exaggerated structural advantage that has underpinned its wider geopolitical leverage.

This is particularly true in West Asia, where the dollar, pegged to petroleum —the currency used worldwide in the oil trade since the 1970s—has been employed to exert control over countries in the region.

In July 1944, at Bretton Woods, a new international financial system, centered around the dollar, was established by the United States. Countries agreed to link the value of their currency to the greenback, and institutions like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank were created under U.S. leadership, governance and control.

Because financial transactions are typically processed through U.S-dominated institutions, like SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication), an electronic interbank payment platform, dollar dominance gives Washington expansive power to impose far-reaching sanctions against other countries and to freeze them out of the global economy.

The United States has weaponized its currency by imposing sanctions and blocking perceived adversaries, like Iran, from SWIFT, using economic isolation to achieve economically what it has failed to do militarily.

As the U.S. and Israel witness their historic chokehold over global resources and defense capabilities slip away, they have reacted with fierce ruthlessness against Palestinian resistance, Iran, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Ansar Allah in Yemen, who are fearlessly contesting their hegemony.

For decades, the United States has preserved its global power through unholy alliances with Israel and through military and economic partnerships with authoritarian Arab regimes, tasked with containing regional opposition.

The Zionist colony was originally embedded in West Asia to protect British imperial interests. Following Britain's decline, Israel secured another willing benefactor. It has served America as a projection of U.S. power in the region for decades.

Paradoxically, Tel Aviv's long-sought war against Iran might actually trigger its own ruin, topple Arab dictators, and shatter America's regional and global supremacy.

The coordinated U.S.and Israeli attacks on Iran set off long-standing anti-imperialist sentiments across the region. These revolutionary undercurrents emerged in 1979 when Iran rejected foreign domination, overthrew the U.S.-backed Pahlavi monarchy, and asserted its independent sovereignty.

For 47 years, the U.S. has been conducting economic warfare against the Islamic Republic through comprehensive, economically destructive sanctions.

In 2008, Iran was cut off from CHIPS (Clearing House Interbank Payments System); and in 2012, all Iranian banks were disconnected from SWIFT. To counter the devastating effects of being cut off from the international financial network, Iran has been forced to change strategies and to seek alternative partners, specifically Russia and China.

In an effort to overcome the impact of U.S. sanctions, Iran became a full member of China-led BRICS, joining Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa in January 2024. Tehran has been urging the bloc to adopt alternative payment systems and national currency settlements to bypass the U.S. dollar and mitigate Western sanctions.

The U.S.-Israel plan for reshaping the region was laid out long ago. In a 1996 policy document titled, "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm," senior national security officials, neoconservative hardliners, argued that Israel's security would be best served, not through the pursuit of peace, but through "regime" change in surrounding countries, starting with Iraq, then Syria and finally Iran.

The enduring geopolitical campaign to restructure West Asia by crushing resistance and establishing absolute U.S. and Israeli dominance finally reached its peak in 2026 with the Iran war.

The urgency of "securing the realm" was reflected in a nativist speech by Secretary of State Marco Rubio delivered in the shadow of the Parthenon in Athens; significantly on October 7 (anniversary of the Palestinian rebellion in Gaza). In addition to extolling its virtues, Rubio stated that Western civilization was at a critical "inflection point" in which the U.S. and Europe must rediscover the values of exploration and conquest that once drove centuries of expansion or face decline or irrelevance.

One passage in particular reveals the jingoistic and arrogant path the United States has been on in West Asia for decades:

And now, today, we find ourselves at a crossroads. Because the next decade and the decision we make will write the story of the next century. The course we take will determine whether the West maintains its place at the head of the world or resigns itself to a future of atrophy and servitude or decline. We will either choose to act now or lose the choice to act at all….We choose the unapologetic pursuit of national power: to take back control of our critical supply chains (translated as the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf and Bab al-Mandeb in the Red Sea), to reindustrialize our economy…to rebuild our defense, to fight for dominance of the technologies and industries of the future.

The U.S. and Israel have chosen the "unapologetic pursuit of national power" in the resource-rich region. Only now have they met their asymmetrical military match in the Islamic Republic, Ansar Allah and Hezbollah, and in the determination of Palestinians to resist subjugation.

The United States has demonstrated that it is incapable of equality; of being one nation among many. It irrationally insists on "maintaining its place at the head of the world," no matter the cost in lives and treasure.

Dr. M. Reza Behnam is a political scientist who specializes in comparative politics with a focus on West Asia.




Crowd moving onto Buarque do Macedo Bridge.

Editor's note: After coming in second in the first round of elections in Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva won the Oct. 25 runoff by 4.4 million votes. It is the first time since Brazil's military dictatorship ended in 1985 that the second-highest vote-getter in the first-round elections won the presidency. His opponent, Flávio Bolsonaro, son of former President Jair Bolsonaro, fled to the U.S. shortly after the election. The following article was written in the runup to the second round of voting.

Millions on the Streets for Lula Across Brazil

By Brian Mier

On Sunday, October 11, the fact that Lula brought out the largest crowd to São Paulo's Paulista Avenue since the Diretas Já movement in the waning days of the U.S.-backed military dictatorship, with estimates of over 1 million, has rightfully occupied a lot of headline space, even in bourgeois media outlets like Globo which notoriously lies about crowd size at leftist marches and protests.

But across Brazil, scores of other campaign marches have brought out huge crowds in the past few days, even in small and mid sized cities, like the conservative city of Uberlândia, which saw 50,000 people come out to show their support for Lula on October 8.

I headed to May 13 Park in Recife's Santo Amaro neighborhood to cover a Lula rally for TeleSur that had been organized by labor unions, the Workers' Party and social movements like UNE, the National Union of Students (União Nacional dos Estudantes). I had covered Lula's surprise visit to Recife on September 25 and witnessed the hastily assembled crowd of 80,000 firsthand. Within minutes of arriving at the park, I knew this one was going to be much bigger.

As I nudged my way through the crowd with my camera equipment, I saw Mayllane Silva, state director of UNE, Brazil's oldest social movement, which is historically connected to the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB). I asked her why UNE helped organize the rally.

"UNE is out on the streets today because we believe President Lula's reelection is essential to defending education in our country," she said. "We can't leave education in Flávio Bolsonaro's hands, given that he wants to take our universities out from under the Education Ministry. He wants to tear down education in our country. That's why UNE isn't just out on the streets here in Pernambuco, but all across Brazil, to say we want President Lula reelected president so we can defend our education system."

During the presidency of Flávio Bolsonaro's father, Jair, the government gutted funding for the federal public university system, leaving many of Brazil's most prestigious public schools, like the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, on the verge of bankruptcy. The large number of young people present was certainly tied to the fight to protect public education against more of the Bolsonaro family's market friendly spending cuts, but it was clear that the fight was bigger than that.

A young man named Álvaro Luís told me, "We're here for all of the minority groups that suffer daily attacks from bolsonarismo. We're here to fight for those who are unprotected. We are here for the Afro-Brazilians, the working class, for the LGBT community, for women and children, and for a better future for our country."

When President Lula was first elected in 2002, less than 4% of Brazil's public university students were Afro-Brazilian, and the vast majority had graduated from prestigious private high schools. The Workers' Party introduced an affirmative action system that represented an improvement over the U.S. model, because it based university entrance quotas on social class and graduating from public elementary and high schools, as well as on race. Today the share of Afro-Brazilian students matches their share of the population at large, roughly 52%. Millions of low income young people became the first in their families to attend college, and many now worry that under Bolsonaro, university will regress into being an elite privilege.

I approached a young woman who was holding a handmade sign that said, "Fire on the Racists," and asked why she had come out. "My name is Alana Lima. I have a bachelor's degree in journalism from the Federal University of Pernambuco, and I was an affirmative action student. I am the daughter of a woman who worked as a kitchen maid and a man who didn't finish elementary school. I am here today because I know the power that education has to transform people's lives, and I don't want this right, which was denied to our ancestors, to be denied to future generations."

I've been covering protests and rallies in Recife for five years now, and this was the largest I had ever seen. Although no size estimate has been made by any credible source at the time of writing this article, I estimate that it was easily twice as large as the crowd of 80,000 that came out to see Lula in person on September 25. Drone footage shows the crowd simultaneously filling the Princesa Isabel Bridge, which connects the Santo Amaro neighborhood to Antônio Vaz Island, crossing the island, and at the same time occupying the entire Buarque do Macedo Bridge to Recife Antigo Island.

As the march reached its final destination at Marco Zero, the original founding point of Recife, newly elected and reelected lawmakers from the Workers' Party (PT), the Communist Party of Brazil (PC do B) and the Socialism and Freedom Party (PSOL) made speeches reminding the crowd of what will be lost if Bolsonaro takes a chainsaw to the national budget like the ones wielded by Milei and Musk.

Jones Manoel, who was recently elected federal deputy for PSOL, said, "Federal investment in our state will dry up, and important public assets like the Abreu e Lima refinery could end up privatized. So it's essential that all of Pernambuco's working class mobilizes to guarantee President Lula's reelection."

Even with the size of the rally, the maracatu drum groups, and the humorous chants against Flávio Bolsonaro that seemed to energize the crowd, there was a palpable underlying tension. Toward the end, I ran into a friend who works at one of the Lula administration's national ministries. Midway through a cheerful exchange of pleasantries, her smile vanished for a second. "I'm really nervous about this," she said.

> ***'We're here for all of the minority groups that suffer daily attacks from bolsonarismo. We're here to fight for those who are unprotected. We are here for the Afro-Brazilians, the working class, for the LGBT community, for women and children, and for a better future for our country.'***

Originally published by Panamanian Dispatch.

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Panamerican Dispatch is a new independent journalism project created in September 2026 to produce and distribute news and analysis from Latin America, within the United States.


Mayllane Silva - Director of UNE Pernambuco.

Why Doesn't the U.S. Observe Armistice Day?

By Rory Fanning



I get angry and frustrated with each Veterans Day because it's less about celebrating veterans than easing the guilty conscience of warmongers

The United States should be celebrating Armistice Day, pausing as a nation to think about the terrible costs of war—including the loss of so many lives. Unfortunately, we replaced it with a very different holiday.

On June 1, 1954, less than a year after America exited the Korean War in defeat, Congress got rid of Armistice Day and started Veterans Day. In place of what had been a celebration of peace, Congress instituted an annual veneration of those who fought in war. America would ever after celebrate not the beauty of peace, but its purveyors of state violence in World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, Lebanon, Grenada, Kosovo, Somalia, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Gaza, Iran, and more.

Governments had meant to do the opposite in 1919: If you read the newspapers of the time closely enough, you can almost hear the collective sigh of relief and jubilation on the first Armistice Day. Millions celebrated peace and renounced war on that November day, a year after the violence in Europe had ended: after the mustard gas stopped burning off soldiers' skin; after Gatling guns stopped mowing down young boys from mostly poor and working-class families; after fighter planes stopped streaking the sky; and after bloody bayonets were wiped clean. In the wake of so much carnage, it was then clear to millions of people that wars were not about valor or romantic ideals, but about empire.

It took only two more wars fighting for empire before Americans buried that day's history as a celebration of peace.

Kurt Vonnegut, a World War II veteran, wrote in 1973:

"Armistice Day has become Veterans' Day. Armistice Day was sacred. Veterans' Day is not. So I will throw Veterans' Day over my shoulder. Armistice Day I will keep. I don't want to throw away any sacred things."

Armistice Day was sacred because it was intended to evoke memories of fear, pain, suffering, military incompetence, greed and destruction on the grandest scale for those who had participated in war, directly and indirectly. Armistice Day was a hallowed anniversary because it was supposed to protect future life from future wars.

Veterans Day, instead, celebrates "heroes" and encourages others to dream of playing the hero themselves, covering themselves in glory. But becoming a "hero" means going off to kill and be killed in a future war—or one of our government's current, unending wars.

I am more angry and frustrated with each passing Veterans Day—since leaving the U.S. Army Rangers in 2003 as a conscientious objector—because it gets clearer and clearer that Veterans Day is less about honoring veterans than it is about easing the guilty consciences of those who have sent and continue to send others to kill and die for reasons that have nothing to do with democracy or freedom.

The Armistice-turned-Veterans Day celebrations will be held in a country that has over 800 military bases around the globe. They will be held in a country that has conducted military operations in two-thirds of the world's countries since 9/11. They will be held in a county that spends a trillion dollars each year on its military—more than the next 13 countries combined. They will be held in a country that has taken hundreds of thousands of lives around the world and shows no sign of slowing down.

What do the millions of people in Afghanistan, Iraq and many other countries that have lost loved ones to America's wars think of these celebrations? What should veterans coping with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, dealing with traumatic injuries or struggling with chronic unemployment think of these events? What do the families of those soldiers and veterans who have taken their own lives feel?

Many soldiers are beginning to question America's wars and their tolls at home and abroad. According to journalist Matt Kennard, more than 40,000 U.S. soldiers have declared their own personal Armistice Days by becoming conscientious objectors since 9/11—and I was one of them.

Once I left the military as a conscientious objector and began speaking about it, the personal "thank-yous" from strangers started to dry up—apparently, it's more heroic to kill people under orders than to demand that you be allowed to stop. But there are many ways to cover yourself in valor and act the hero, even if there's only one way sanctioned by a federal holiday.

If we really wanted to honor veterans, we would abolish Veterans Day and replace it with a day that celebrates peace, not war. Peace is a better way to honor the sacrifice of veterans like me than a day designed to recruit the next generation of soldiers we'll have to thank for their service in yet another war..

Rory Fanning is a two-tour veteran of the U.S. war and occupation of Afghanistan with the Seventy-Fifth Ranger Regiment. He is the author of Worth Fighting For: An Army Ranger's Journey Out of the Military and Across America,



Photo: Ellen Davidson

Defeat Fascism

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ment has demonstrated that when we act collectively, we can wield real power. Desperate to hold on to power, the Trump regime is lashing out, convinced that if it can overwhelm and exhaust us, we will eventually give up.

That's where they're wrong. In February 2025, a month after Trump took office for the second time, JVP's Executive Director Stefanie Fox wrote in the Wire about what was coming:

"They will try to make us shrink or surrender. Instead, we will get bolder every day. Repression's silencing effect can spread fast, but courage is also contagious. When your voice rises, mine does too."

Two years later, amid constant attacks, we're still here. We have refused to cede even one inch before we've lost it. We have refused to leave anyone behind. We have refused to allow political divisions—real or manufactured—to turn us against each other. Instead of shrinking, we have grown bigger and bolder, disrupting business as usual at every turn and refusing to allow genocide or fascism to become the new normal.

Our fight is not over; in fact, we're just getting started. The Trump regime understands our movement as a force to be reckoned with, and they're going to keep coming after us. Our job is to resist despair, to remain committed to one another and to our shared struggle, and to stay focused on the task at hand. Palestine is the compass. We're not going anywhere.

Jewish Voice for Peace is a grassroots, multiracial, cross-class, intergenerational movement of U.S. Jews in solidarity with the Palestinian freedom struggle, guided by a vision of justice, equality and dignity for all people.

Coleen Littlejohn: A Life of Grace and Revolution

By Roger D. Harris

Originally from the snow country of upstate New York, Coleen Littlejohn chose to make Nicaragua her home and to support its Sandinista Revolution. She lived a life of demonstrable grace.

Coleen passed on October 25, 2026, after a prolonged battle with cancer. When I last spoke with her three weeks ago, her positive attitude was as infectious as ever, and she still hoped to do more solidarity work. Her loss will be felt profoundly by her family, her wide circle of friends, the solidarity movement, and at the highest levels of the Sandinista government. She touched many lives and accomplished much in her lifetime.

According to a web search and the best of my memory, Coleen completed a BA in history at Le Moyne College and a master's in development economics at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in 1977. She then worked as a development economist for Catholic Relief Services in Colombia, Chile, and Nicaragua, and for Save the Children-Canada in Nicaragua. She was an officer with the World Bank in Nicaragua and Liberia, along with assignments in Ghana, Washington, DC, and elsewhere.

Coleen's Nicaraguan husband died in a plane crash in Cuba that some suspected had been caused by U.S. sabotage. A naturalized citizen, she lived in Nicaragua since 1980, raising her son there. Her grandchildren were the joy of her life.

In June 2023, Coleen helped organize the Nicaragua hearing of the International People's Tribunal on Sanctions with testimony from nine Nicaraguan witnesses and one participating remotely from the U.S.. The National Lawyers Guild, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, and others sponsored the multi-country investigation.

That year, she also presented a professional case study titled "A Different Pandemic Strategy: Nicaragua Example" at an international conference on the effects of COVID-19 restrictions in low- and middle-income countries held at King's College in London.

This important report refuted the slander against Nicaragua's public health response, emphasizing its community-based healthcare system, vaccination campaigns, hospital infrastructure, and efforts to protect vulnerable populations. She argued that Nicaragua's investment in universal healthcare and community health workers contributed to its management of the pandemic. Earlier in her career, she had helped coordinate the World Bank's response to the Ebola outbreak in Liberia.

She continued to organize international solidarity delegations to Nicaragua, even after she had undergone repeated cancer treatments. In March 2025, Coleen hosted a delegation from Veterans for Peace. Her home was always a welcoming place for international visitors and locals alike, whom she treated with characteristic warmth and generosity.



Veterans For Peace delegation in Nicaragua in 2019, hosted by Coleen Littlejohn (in blue dress on the right). She was dedicated to getting more people to Nicaragua to see its remarkable progress with their own eyes.



in 2022 with an international delegation to celebrate the anniversary of the Sandinista National Liberation Front's (FSLN) 1979 overthrow of the U.S.-backed Somoza family dictatorship. Two days after that year's celebration, I fell sick. Delirious with a 103°F fever from COVID and pneumonia, Coleen helped admit me to the new Hospital Fernando Velez Paiz Epicrisis. In a country striving for socialism like Nicaragua, healthcare is considered a human right and is free.

> *To the end, she remained an activist with the Nicaragua Solidarity Coalition and the SanctionsKill! Campaign. And everything she did was infused with grace. Her kindness and generosity were extraordinary.*

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And everything she did was infused with grace. Her kindness and generosity were extraordinary.

On a personal note, I visited Nicaragua in 2022 with an international delegation to celebrate the anniversary of the Sandinista National Liberation Front's (FSLN) 1979 overthrow of the U.S.-backed Somoza family dictatorship. Two days after that year's celebration, I fell sick. Delirious with a 103°F fever from COVID and pneumonia, Coleen helped admit me to the new Hospital Fernando Velez Paiz Epicrisis. In a country striving for socialism like Nicaragua, healthcare is considered a human right and is free.

Six days later, I was discharged and spent the next three weeks convalescing at Coleen's house until I had recovered enough to fly home. I was just one of many who benefited from her extraordinary hospitality, which strengthened our commitment and solidarity in support of Nicaragua's living revolution.

Another, broader example of her grace was how she adroitly navigated the vicissitudes of the Sandinista Revolution through its 1990 defeat at the polls, its electoral return in 2007, and the attempted coup of 2018. Coleen remained committed to the elected Sandinista leadership; some others close to her did not.

Yet her grace was so deep and genuine that she was not acrimonious about people in her life who differed with her about the revolution's direction. She had a remarkable ability to move on. She would simply note that some people "don't agree," although she still treated them with respect. That was Coleen's generosity of spirit—her grace in action—even as she remained militantly siempre Sandinista.

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Roger D. Harris is a founding member of the Venezuela Solidarity Network and is active with the Task Force on the Americas and the SanctionsKill Campaign

Settler Pogroms

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attacks and crimes express the will of the settlement-building deep state. They faithfully carry on its legacy. Truly repudiating them would require us to reexamine our entire history.

It is not the Israeli media that is responsible for concealing crimes committed in plain sight, but Israel's Jewish public, which refuses to have its peace disturbed. Except for the handful of activists. It is not editors who decided that the routine abuse Jews inflict on Palestinians fails to meet the threshold for news, but the ratings algorithm that obeys the voice of the masses. It is not television channel owners alone who set the priorities, but the viewers flicking between channels. The media is not betraying its role. It is simply heeding the will of the people. And the will of the people and the viewers is to wallow in their perpetual victimhood and soar on the wings of their pilots' heroism. And move into villas overlooking a biblical landscape.

This routine grows exponentially, pushing the limits of what we can get used to higher every day. The sadism is hyperactive, dancing and darting about at all hours of the day and night. Our taxes fund it, along with the judges, police officers, generals, prosecutors and soldiers who have enabled it and continue to do so. Everyone is involved. Except for the handful.You will ask: Are pensioners, the frail and those who need nursing care involved too? Yes, because before they reached that stage, they could have stopped the sadism and did not. A cruel judgment? Go to the sick and wounded in Gaza who are slowly dying for lack of medicine and the chance to travel abroad for treatment, and learn from them what cruelty is.

You will press the point, rightly: Is a baby involved too, when its parents, their smiles stretching from the edge of the father's kippa to the far side of the mother's stylish head covering, have settled on a farm in the middle of land from which their friends expelled a Bedouin community? A difficult question. You will find the answer among the babies in Gaza whom our pilots killed.

Originally published in Haarez.

Amira Hass is an Israeli journalist, columnist, activist, and author, known for her columns in the daily newspaper Haaretz covering Palestinian affairs in Gaza and the West Bank, where she has lived for almost 30 years.

A Great Moral Blind Spot of Our Age

The sickening situation in American meatpacking plants could soon get worse, for the Trump administration proposed raising the maximum normal speed of chicken slaughter lines from 140 birds per minute to 175 per minute.

By Nicholas Kristof


Photo: Ellen Davidson

Many human societies live with a contradiction: a fondness for meat on the plate and distaste for how it gets there. | jeannetteferrary.photoshelter.com

"If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be vegetarian," Paul McCartney has said.

Perhaps for that reason, slaughterhouses and factory farms have not only thick walls but also often barbed wire fences. Yet every now and then we catch a peek of what goes on behind those walls. One glimpse comes from video taken by an undercover investigator who worked at a chicken slaughterhouse in Dobson, N.C., from June through September.

The investigator, an employee of the nonprofit Animal Outlook, shared the video with me, and it can also be seen on the Animal Outlook website. The scenes underscore the frantic pace of the assembly line—except that in this case it's a disassembly line, in which the birds come apart.

My takeaway from this glimpse is that the inside of even a well-run slaughterhouse is a sickening sight and that the comforting narrative of humane slaughter—as federal law terms it—bears little relation to the horror that livestock and poultry often endure in their final moments on the way to our dinner plates.

The situation in American meatpacking plants could soon get worse, for the Trump administration proposed raising the maximum normal speed of chicken slaughter lines from 140 birds per minute to 175 per minute. The maximum pace for killing turkeys would also increase under the new rules, and there would be no maximum whatsoever for the slaughter of pigs.

The increased speeds would probably increase efficiency somewhat. But critics of the industry warn that the gains would come at the expense of the animals and workers alike.

"Everyone in the room is suffering to some degree,"


Photo: Ellen Davidson

said the investigator, Daniel, who asked that his full name not be published because he hopes to get other undercover jobs. He said that the workers regularly suffered hand injuries and often didn't last long at the plant, even though wages were relatively good—$21 an hour, plus a $2-an-hour bonus on some days. He calculated that he helped kill about 500,000 chickens, a task that was soul-sucking.

"Any reasonable person seeing this would understand that this is simply cruelty," Daniel said as together we watched video he had taken of the slaughter line. "It's caused in part because of line speeds. And it's not just cruelty toward the chickens. The workers are suffering as well." One worker, he said, had passed out and was bundled out while the rest of the crew kept hanging chickens on the line.

The slaughterhouse where Daniel worked is part of Wayne-Sanderson Farms, one of America's largest poultry producers, and it already has a waiver from the Agriculture Department to operate the Dobson plant at the higher speed, as something of a test case. So the video provides a sense of how the faster line would work.

There is no horrific gotcha in the video, nothing that seems illegal. The video shows workers grabbing chickens and rapidly shoving their feet hard into shackles on an assembly line that then carries them upside down to their deaths. The operation is immensely loud and frenetic. Daniel said that it was difficult to tell if they were breaking the chickens' legs but that some birds already had broken legs or wings from previous aggressive handling. Meanwhile, the terrified chickens are defecating, so bird poop is flying all over the workers and covering them, he said.

I shared the video with Wayne-Sanderson Farms for its reaction. "The general agreement is that there's no violation of industry standards there per se," said Frank Singleton, a company spokesman, although he added that the company's animal welfare experts would also review it and weigh in. After the review, the company said it had found some instances in which employees did not meet proper standards but that these were not pervasive. It said it had immediately added training to address shortcomings.

Faster line speeds do not necessarily harm animals or workers, Singleton said, or jeopardize food safety.

Animal welfare advocates disagree, and they warn that accelerating the line would mean that some animals would not be stunned properly before they were killed. To me, that seems a grievous risk.

Typically, a slaughter line carries chickens by the shackles into an electrified bath that is supposed to stun them into unconsciousness, and then an electric saw cuts their throats to kill them. The line then dunks them into a tank of extremely hot water so that their feathers can be plucked—but sometimes, even at slower speeds, the birds miss the stunning and the saw and end up scalded to death.

How many chickens are scalded to death each year? Animal welfare advocates cite some evidence indicating it may be in the hundreds of thousands each year.

As for what one sees on the video of what happens in a slaughter plant, Wayne-Sanderson Farms doesn't try to argue that it is uplifting but simply an indication of how the modern meat industry operates.

"Perhaps it's intrinsic," Singleton said. "I mean, you have to produce meat. You have to go through a process to get there."

I think he has a point: Slaughtering animals is an ugly business. Many human societies live with a contradiction: a fondness for meat on the plate and distaste for how it gets there.

By averting our eyes from this contradiction, we've allowed livestock and poultry operations to become industrialized in ways that lower meat prices and thus benefit consumers.

And yet. What about the animals?

Ben Williamson, the executive director of Animal Outlook, agreed with Wayne-Sanderson Farms that the undercover video captured typical industry practices. But what he and I both see, above all, is not industrial efficiency but industrial cruelty. Some day, I suspect, our descendants will see our treatment of farm animals as a great moral blind spot of our age.

"When you watch this footage, this is standard practice," Williamson said. "And even this standard practice is horrifically cruel."

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